

TRANSFORMING AN AFRICAN AMERICAN RURAL
CHURCH VIA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A THESIS-PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
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MAY 2019

To my late loving mother, Lucille Watson Henderson

Thank you.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the love and support of my faithful and loyal wife Catherine White-Henderson. You have always been my greatest supporter and I thank God for you; to my loving great-granddaughter Yamiah who advised me a few months ago that I was your daddy and not your grand paw. You have provided me with courage and strength every time I think about you. I thank God daily that you are a part of my life and I love you to the moon and back; to my pastor and First Lady Bishop John A. McCullough, and Elder Dekota Grier McCullough. Thanks to the both of you for not only being my leaders but my friends as well. Thank you both for your prayers and support. Bishop, thank you especially for a sermon you preached in the latter part of 2018 that referenced *Spiritual Discipline*. That sermon was major in my completing this project. God bless you both and I love you dearly; to my friends and co-laborers of the gospel, thank you all for your input as you shared your pastoral, and ministry experiences. I will forever be indebted to you all. Had it not been for the wisdom of each of you, much of what I've accomplished would not have been possible. To Bishop A. L. Jinwright my spiritual father. I don't have the words to express my appreciation. You taught me much of what I know about ministry and the importance of education. But more important than that, in the absence of my biological father, in my life, you taught me how to be a man, the head of my household, and the importance of loving my wife; to a very special person, church member, and dear friend Elder Charlene A. Robbins, MDiv, thank you for working so hard to assist me in your area of expertise as it relates to formatting, and your knowledge of computers. I thank you from the depths of my heart, to Dr. Dave Currie, my mentor, who would never let me give up - Thank

you! Special thanks to Dr. Ken Swetland, who was my professor during my cohort and had planned to be a part of my defense; but, suffered an illness a couple of weeks before.

I thank you and pray God heals you.

Finally, last but certainly not least I give all praise and thanks to God. Without Him I never would have made it. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit reviving me when I was drained and felt I couldn't survive I wouldn't be here. Thank God for Jesus!

ABSTRACT

Doing things decently and in order is paramount in the church of God. My thesis-project addresses the lack of structure in the African American Rural Church (AARC). In this project, I address the importance of transforming the church via Leadership Development. This thesis-project covers such things as the pastor's role, deacon's responsibilities, and the overall responsibilities of church members. It also addresses the importance of working as a team to accomplish God's mission. Paul's instructions to the pastor included preparing men and women for ministry. Also Jethro advises his son-in-law Moses of the dangers of trying to do the work alone.

I addressed also the problem the African American church faces in calling a pastor. For example, the AARC traditionally forms committees and interviews candidates, and this is not biblical. Biblically, Jesus laid hands on the disciples and sent them on their way to do ministry. In this project, generally speaking, a pastor who has long tenure in a church prior to his/her leaving should appoint and train a successor. I argue that leaders should be trained in order for successful transition in the AARC.

CHAPTER ONE-INTRODUCTION

There are multiple problems within the African American rural church. One major problem is a lack of written policies and procedures. For instance, in my experience, financial mismanagement occurs when only one person is responsible for the finances. That person's signature is the only one required when writing checks, and all statements and correspondence are sent to this person's home address. The lack of internal control opens the door for financial mismanagement, confusion, and even theft. I know of a situation where something like this occurred and a large sum of money was mishandled. Needless to say this created a serious problem. Then there is the issue of those being paid by the church not reporting individual taxes or the church's taxes. In this day and time an audit by the IRS could lead to a disaster.

Conflict of interest results when family members hold the most important positions such as, treasurer, church clerk, chair of finance committee, and deacon board member. This was another issue I have had some direct experience with, and this is often the case due to a shortage of those willing to work. However, I believe some positions should remain vacant if the only alternative is having to fill them with family members. Frequently this comes from a lack of training among the leadership.

The lack thereof is often due to a lack of information reaching the rural church. Typically the preacher /pastor, who is not necessarily accepted as a reliable resource because of his or her tenure, the tenure for the pastor in most cases is very short, thus making it difficult for him or her to establish any type leadership development. In most cases the rural church doesn't want any outside interference. In fact a lot of their pastors are from around the area, and if by chance an outsider is selected their chances of

succeeding are slim to none. There is also a problem when it comes to selecting a pastor. No where do I find in scripture where a pastor search committee was formed and a leader was chosen. Jesus trained and prepared the twelve for the work. I believe when possible a pastor should choose his or her successor. Even in the event of death prior arrangements should be made and accepted by the pastor and board of directors on what to do in the event of the pastor's death. This was done locally in my city when a very well known pastor expired suddenly. His successor was previously named in the event of his death one who he had previously trained across the years and it has worked out fine. In another situation Pastor Jeremiah Wright in Chicago IL in anticipation of his retirement after much prayer chose Dr. Otis Moss some years before his retirement brought him on staff at the church trained him and prepared him to take the helm. Bishop George Brooks former pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Greensboro NC in anticipation of his retirement put the present pastor Bishop Bryan J. Pierce, Sr. on staff some five years before his retirement and trained him to take over as pastor (these are examples I am aware of but have no source.). While this is not very common it is biblical. I am not attempting to mislead anyone because I know of a couple of instances where this approach was taken and it didn't work but it was because the new leader decided to go in a different direction than was planned. This happens to us when we don't do as God has instructed us. The successful transitions that I've mentioned were successful because laity trusted God, and trusted that the predecessor who they followed for many years because they believed he followed God in years passed they trusted him to train and put a successor in place. When we follow God's plan we can't go wrong.

I believe that a lack of written policies as guidelines creates most of the above problems, or not following policies or by-laws that are in place. When policies are written, they are written to be followed. This is another area where in my experience, if there were by-laws in place; the people seemed only to adhere to them when it was beneficial to them. One general trend that is probably the same in all churches whether urban or rural, and no matter the size, is that there are cliques and every clique has a “pastor”. Cliques are groups that form and stand together to pass their agenda and every clique has a leader that is known as the “pastor.”

The rural church is characterized not only by location but the size of the membership.”Two hundred or smaller typically is the size.”¹ This number in a lot of cases is the number of members on roll but not necessarily the amount that attend each Sunday. A congregation with two hundred on roll probably averages anywhere from fifty to seventy-five in attendance for Sunday morning worship, and it won’t be the same fifty to seventy-five every Sunday. There will be a different crowd first, second, third, fourth, and even fifth Sunday. Because of this there are characteristics that the rural church has that urban, and mega churches don’t possess.

1. Many in the congregation are related by blood or marriage.
2. Relationships are close and inseparable.
3. Finances are often not available to support pastoral compensation comparable to similar sized non rural congregations or ministry beyond Sunday worship.
4. The pastor may have a very limited job description if any at all.
5. Due to a lack of resources volunteers are essential to the life of the church.

1 Doran McCarty, *Leading The Small Church*: (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1991), 17.

While any one rural church may not have all of the above, these characteristics tend to apply to small rural churches in general.

Having pastored three African American rural churches, and being a member of two African American urban churches, I have discovered similarities just as well disparities. They are similar in that in many cases there are just not enough finances to support pastoral compensation. Many churches whether rural or urban just can't afford a full-time pastor. This makes bi-vocational pastoring a necessity. Bivocational means a pastor who does not depend solely on the church for his/her compensation. This is a very difficult thing to do. To work forty or more hours a week, visit the sick, teach bible study, and prepare a word for Sunday morning, and in some cases Sunday evening, is almost impossible. However in our culture this is a growing reality because most congregations depend on tithes and offerings to support the church. General economic distress with parishioners being laid off, having hours reduced, and pay cuts have made things even more difficult.

Another common difference between rural churches and urban churches is the ability and willingness to generate revenue outside tithes and offerings, particularly by taking advantage of 501c3. This is the most common type of tax exempt status whereby a nonprofit does not have to pay many kinds of federal, state, and local taxes if its activities are charitable and religious. In addition to being exempt from many taxes the organization is eligible for government funding for such things as, daycares, senior citizen facilities, and even church schools. These, among other things, can generate more revenue for the church. In my last pastorate not only had the board never heard of it, but they were not willing to organize to become eligible for this status.

Finally, I have colleagues, and even a family member, who pastor in other denominations e.g. Presbyterian, A.M.E. Zion, and A.M.E. These denominations oversee, and support their churches, unlike the Missionary Baptist Church which is autonomous. This has its advantages in that the denomination often helps with pastoral compensation, and building repairs, among other things. One thing that's probably most important is that pastors are placed by a presiding Bishop, or an authoritative board, not simply the congregation.

The African American rural church generally does not develop specialized ministries rather it is by nature holistic, meaning that almost anything can be done by almost anyone in almost any way, as opposed to any special designations. It does not appreciate any specialization in areas such as evangelism, youth, music, or even preaching. One example of being resistant to following any kind of standard protocols is found in how business meetings are conducted. Robert's Rules of Order are rarely followed; people attending the meeting often will bring up a subject; those in attendance will discuss the matter, and after a lengthy discussion someone will make a motion. The meeting doesn't consist of committee reports, rather it is limited to, the deacon's report, treasurer's report, and any old and new business, then the meeting is adjourned. Decision making in the rural church tends to be less formal. The attitude often seems to be, in most cases without structure, and this is the way it's been for years, and, the foreseeable future doesn't seem to make any changes.

Change is very different in the rural church. Rural churches tend to resist any and all change. Most pastors who've pastored in small rural African American churches have advised that change is slow and most times impossible. Doran McCarty says in

Leading the Small Church, “small rural churches often see the contrast between their church and large churches and see the change as more appropriate for large churches.”

Relational ties within the church are partly responsible for the slow pace to change or the lack thereof. Members in the rural church have individual investments in the church, and the thought of change makes them feel as if they’re going to lose their investment.

Heritage is very important to the small rural church. Most members know a lot of the history of the church, and they feel they are very much a part of it. When change is viewed as threatening, the heritage, the rural church is very reluctant and less likely to accept the change no matter what it is even potentially beneficial change.

Another challenge in pastoring, the rural church is that little is ever documented. They will often shun any type of proposal in writing but will act on something major very quickly with little or no documentation. For instance, to plan for an addition to the church, by having a capital fund drive would be almost out of the question. On the other hand, after meeting at one of the deacon’s, house and discussing the addition, they would probably agree on building the addition themselves. There are rarely written goals or any long term planning process. The small rural church would say that those things are for big churches; they have their own inside calendar and special way of doing things. If a pastor suggests a plan they may approve it just to humor him; however, they have their own agenda.

Another area that commonly lacks any real planning is a budget. A budget is merely a formality, just to say they’ve done one. For the most part, spending is done with very little accountability. However, there is one area that is monitored rather closely, and that is the pastor’s salary.

In part that is because the pastor is not revered and is looked at as putting his or her pants on one leg at a time just as they do. While the pastor does put pants on one leg at a time, the bible is clear in I Timothy 5:17 on a pastor being worthy of double honor. The idea of not changing assures organizational simplicity. Intentional organization is Chinese to the rural church.

The rural church is also highly, perhaps primarily, relationally driven. The membership dwells on face-to-face relationships. To be honest, they are more concerned with the quality of the relationship, than the number of relationships. In a lot of cases, most of the membership is related, in some way or the other. The rural church is identified more through internal, informal neighborhood and kinship networks or organizations. Most everything is identified by and through individual relationships. For instance, you don't send your child to the intermediate Sunday school class even though that would be the appropriate age group for them. Instead, you send them to Sister Mayfield's class. Regardless of the subject matter, the most important thing will be the character of Sis Mayfield. It is not so important in the rural church that leaders be knowledgeable of their position, or even worse, that they be people of integrity or character, but that they are insiders. This type of church poses a problem for the pastor that is able to organize and develop because the rural church is people oriented, even to the detriment of healthy processes.

Fellowship is the backbone of the small rural church. They are in constant contact with each other from one Sunday to another. When they come to church on Sundays it gives them the opportunity to renew their fellowship. While worship should be the most important thing

to them, worship takes a back seat to the fellowship that comes before and afterwards. Even the sermon, in some cases takes a back seat to fellowship. The urban church has secondary groups that become strong, fellowships, but the rural church tends to look for fellowship almost exclusively from the congregation as a whole. Every part of the church is affected by the relational character of the church.

The rural church is also old-fashioned, and doesn't pattern herself after fads. The urban church will take up a fad, try it, and leave it, while the rural church is still debating it. When rural congregations see the urban church stop a new kind of ministry, they infer that this is probably a good sign they never did it. This resistance to running after one fad after another can be strength of the rural church, though it can harden into general rejection of change of any kind.

There is power in any church; in fact, without it the church could not function. However, the difference in the rural church is that the power lies in the hands of the laity almost exclusively and not the pastor. The pastor has the title but not the authority. This is because the focus is relational and not organizational. The rural church seems to feel as if they own the church as a result of the paying of their tithes and offerings. The idea is that they've been there all along but the pastor is just some outsider who has come along and has no investment, and what's worse, won't be there that long. "The pastor will get a salary (take out), but it will be years before the members see the pastor's sacrifice (input) equal theirs."²

I have been a pastor for about fifteen of the forty-two years I've been in ministry, and in those fifteen years I have pastored four churches, and all have been African

2 Doran McCarty, *Leading the Small Church*: (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, Press, 1991), 55.

American rural churches. I want to share my experiences in trying to transform these ministries, in particular the one I pastored most recently from December 2009 through December 2012. I don't want to insinuate that these type churches need to become or even mimic urban churches, or even that they should change completely. However, I am suggesting that a little more structure, and order added to their already distinctive character would make a great positive difference.

Baptist church administration is defined by a high degree of local church autonomy, which allows each congregation to flow on its own without outside interference. In an attempt to not get rid of tradition but to add to it, I attempted transforming leaders via workshops, seminars, and conferences. Realizing I didn't know it all, I sought specialists in many areas and brought them in to teach and help transform first the minds of the leaders in hopes that it would overflow throughout the church. As "And do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."³ If there is no change of mind then chances are nothing, and no one else will change. I was also a firm believer in Proverbs 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish..."⁴ believing that vision is given to the pastor and it is the responsibility of the congregants to catch on and go along. Needless to say, that in my experience, this was unheard of and wasn't accepted very well and thus wasn't very productive. The drive that led to seeking change was what I believed was the vision that God had given me for that ministry, as well as some simple if you will housekeeping best practices. After reading

3 Rom 12:2 (NKJV)

4 Prov 29:18 (KJV)

several books such as *The Purpose Driven Life*⁵, *The Five Star Church*⁶, and *Transitioning*⁷, just to mention a few, I began my journey.

I began to try and instill the fact that we needed to change the method but not the message, the approach needed to be different. 1. **approach**- from being “program driven to being purpose driven, 2. **target**- from reaching “fellow Baptists” to reaching the unchurched, 3. **worship style**- from traditional to extremely contemporary, 4. **leadership**- from a committee/ deacon led church to a staff-led church, 5. **ministry**- from staff doing all the ministry to staff being equippers and lay ministers doing the ministry, 6. **strategy**- from no systematic plan for reaching the lost and developing those we win to a life cycle process that is driven by small groups, 7. **small groups**- from traditional Sunday school to relational small groups.⁸

I really attempted this with much fire and enthusiasm, and for the most part it was exciting to the leaders as well, as we were on a new journey. We had classes on how to be an effective leader, evangelism, ways to grow the church spiritually, numerically, and financially. Again this was received well in the beginning, but just like a lot of other things when the shiny part wears off enthusiasm is lost. In other words, upon my departure I discovered that conformation had taken place as opposed to transformation. I learned quickly that the people merely conformed and no transformation had taken place.

5 Rick Warren *The Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids Zondervan,, MI: 2002.

6 Stan Toler and Alan Nelson, *The Five Star Church, Serving God and His People With Excellence*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books 1999).

7 Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* Grand Rapids MI: (Zondervan 1999).

8 Stan Toler and Alan Nelson, *The Five Star Church, Serving God and His People With Excellence*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books1999).

As I mentioned earlier, my attempt was never to do away with what the African American rural church has because it is great in heritage and has many good qualities. One thing I liked about the AARC (African American Rural Church) is that it is very relational, in part because of its size. Membership in a lot of cases is small, and the church itself sits right in the community and everyone knows everyone. In a lot of cases everybody in the church is related in some way or the other, and the members will tell you that somewhere along the line they are related. Based on this, relationships are warm and have been long lasting even if it has been generational. In my experience the memberships weren't connected to any spiritual leading to connect with the church, as is found in I Corinthians 12:18 KJV "but now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body as it hath pleased him..."⁹ but just on the strength of the fact that this is my family church. It is good to have these types of relationships; however, they can have a negative impact as well. Sometimes if we aren't careful we can use our relationships to usurp authority and to get what we want with ulterior motives. This can and has caused division in the church. An example of this is in this culture the congregants are allowed to nominate persons for particular offices in the church at the annual church conference. They do this with the motive of getting some by-law revised or changed. The nomination in and of itself has nothing to do with the capabilities of the nominee.

I attempted to change this tradition based on Numbers 11:16-17 (NLT):

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather before me seventy men who are recognized as Elders and leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with you. I will come down and talk to you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone."¹⁰

9 I Cor 12:18 (NKJV)

10 Numbers 11:16-17 (NLT)

However, this wasn't accepted too well. In all of my endeavors I sought to base my suggestions on Scripture, but nonetheless if people have been doing something a long time, it takes a long time to break those traditions.

Another good thing about the AARC is, it is a church of memories. Members may remember the church from its inception. A lot of African American rural churches are small churches, and they have a lot of history. They remember one minister who was there for years and in their minds is almost impossible to replace. No written record of this is kept; it is an oral tradition.¹¹ It is a part of the small church's distrust of paper that makes oral tradition so important. While memories are important, I contend that they would serve better if they were recorded in the archives of the church. This tradition puts more faith in oral than recorded memories. I also contend that oral memories can fail us, but documentation is more dependable.

The AARC is also known for its inwardness. This does not refer to it being self-centered, however it refers to the fact that they rarely look to outsiders to help solve their problems; they depend solely on each other. This in many ways is a good practice because it keeps dirty laundry in house, and the church's business is not all over the community. However, while it has its advantages I believe it would help to seek some unbiased advice. In my experience, as long as opinions come solely from inside, there's no room for forward progress; there are no fresh ideas, and to a degree I believe that is why the church wants to remain so autonomous that they continue to do the same old thing the same old way.

Another trait of the AARC is that they're non-faddish. The fact that they are basically set in their ways saves them from following every fad that comes along. This is

¹¹ Doran McCarty, *Leading the Small Church*: (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, Press, 1991), 23.

good in many ways, but I believe it has its disadvantages as well. I don't say try every wind that blows but to try some new things wouldn't hurt. It is diversity that has grown churches of all sorts. We must do what is necessary to reach the unsaved without compromising the gospel.

The AARC also usually has a strong display of commitment. Some of the commitments are strong Christian commitments, while others are due to their culture and heritage. Members of small rural churches tend to have deep commitments to one another as well; this includes people in the community and relatives. They also have commitments to the church building itself and the cemetery next to it. Commitment is a good thing when not taken to the extreme. I experienced this first hand. In one church I served we had the vision to build a new edifice, and for the most part the people seemed to be in agreement. We started a drive to raise money to add to the building fund. The church was well able to purchase land based on a few CDs on hand; however, we wanted to see how much we could raise. Ultimately raising the money wasn't the problem. The people were so committed to the property that they didn't want to build anywhere else. The property where we were worshipping had no room to expand. The only thing we could have done with it was to build up but not out due to the cemetery being on one side and a cotton field which wasn't for sale on the other. During the process I mentioned purchasing land not far from where we were. When I suggested that we didn't have to have enough acreage for a cemetery, it was met with considerable resistance. I was accustomed to church members purchasing plots at private or public cemeteries. Most churches in the area have choir stands to the right and left of the pulpit. I was accustomed to the choir being directly behind the pulpit. In discussing building plans, I

suggested having the choir stand behind the pulpit, which again led to considerable resistance. I didn't know that in that area traditionally the choir stands were on the side to accommodate the hymn choirs.

In relation to the needs of the AARC, my hypothesis is that more organization and structure added to what already exists in the AARC would strengthen an already strong institution. McCarty said in *Leading the Small Church* that; "urban trained pastors don't fare well in the small rural church because structure and a lot of organization are far from what they feel they need."¹² Again, I don't believe that all is wrong in the church, I just think that adding to what you already have makes for a better church. I also believe that doing things with more intentionality increases the chance of growth numerically.

Typically people rate churches on how they are treated when they visit and what they see when they arrive. They also respond to what they hear and feel. The word will get around, and people will continue to come if the reputation of the church is that of being top quality, and service oriented in all they do. We need to strive for excellence and care about our church property, programming and publicity because God deserves our best. We are his representatives, and we are liaisons between God and others. When we half do things, we are not representing him well because God is a God of excellence. Think about creation. After he created everything he looked at it and said "It is good". When we don't do things in a spirit of excellence and then put his name to it, we insult him. The truth of the matter is that as times have changed, we must change as well. As change occurs, we must respond to it differently. If not, we will lose touch with reality and eventually have

¹²McCarty *Leading the Small Church*. 40.

to close the doors of the church.”¹³ “Although our inherent message must never change, our methods must.”¹⁴ We cannot operate the way we did ten years ago, much less the way we did forty years ago.

As aforementioned , I believe there is a problem in the African American rural church based on my past experiences. I believe that biblical training, biblical application, and a desire to make necessary change will begin a much needed process.

I will interview colleagues who have attempted the same process in the African American rural church and been successful, as well as a couple who attempted and failed as well. I will also speak with some African American pastors who pastor urban churches and attempted transformation and was met with similar opposition if not the same opposition. I will also include other experiences I’ve had to address the growing problem that I believe still exists in the African American rural church. The bible is our road map as to how the Lord intended for His church to function. In the following chapters I will attempt to lift from the pages of the holy writ the general functions of the church and what instructions we have to carry out His mission. While I believe the African American rural church has good heritage I still believe it must not conform to this world but transform by the changing of or renewing of her mind and that must come via leadership development.

13 Stan Toler and Alan Nelson, *The Five Star Church, Serving God and His People With Excellence*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books 1999), 21.

14 Stan Toler, Alan Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1999), 22.

To stress even more the importance of the need for change, and leadership development in a book entitled *Rise up Breaking Free into Anointed Living* Dr. Anthony L. Jinwright talks of the church in and of itself needing revival. North American Christianity has been declining for practically two decades. “In 1975, *Time magazine* announced the Year of the Evangelical.”¹⁵ Since that time energy and authority of the church has been on the decline. Present Sunday church attendance, historically a stable statistic, is at its lowest point in thirty years. Less than 35 percent of Americans attend church on any given weekend. The presence of young adults has declined even more. Those thirty and under, fewer than 15 percent attend church. Mainline church attendance has declined the most. “Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, who enjoyed great success in the 1970, have receded in a number of key indicators during the decade of the 1990’s.”¹⁶

These downturns in church attendance are connected to other important tendencies. Sunday school, as an institute is fighting for life. Knowledge of the truth as it relates to the bible and Christian doctrine has volatilized from the congregants. “Charitable giving to Christian ministries, another reliable indicator of religious commitment, has been sluggish despite the greatest economic upswing in American history.”¹⁷ Although Dr. Jinwright’s work was written in 2002 many of his observations are contributing factors to our church problems today, and I submit that the answer is change via leadership development.

15 Anthony L. Jinwright, *Rise Up: Breaking Free into Anointed Living*, (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002), 21.

16 Jinwright, *Rise Up: Breaking Free into Anointed Living*: 21, 22.

17 Jinwright, *Rise Up: Breaking Free into Anointed Living*: 22.

These changes must be directed by God and not man. It's sad to say but many Christians are not aware of the power of God through his Spirit. They're not aware of the fact that God's Spirit can transform, restructure, reorganize, transmute, and even metamorphose their lives. There is a need for awareness of the divine in every area of our lives. Living a Spiritual life can and will not come from our own efforts. It is a gift from God, who creates life from nothing.

In his perceptive book, *The Soul of Ministry*, Ray Anderson says that all ministry is really the ministry of God through us. "We can never do it by ourselves. God ministers ex nihilo. This Latin phrase means literally, "out of nothing." He creates life out of nothing."¹⁸

In today's society the words change and hope have taken on new meanings. It appears that no matter where we find ourselves we tend to remain comfortable in that state. Though some of us may desire change remaining in our comfort zones tends to make us resist it which will diminish our success in life.

Bishop Paul S. Morton says in his book *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*. "God is always in the process of *changing us forward*: spiritually and otherwise."¹⁹ We can have faith that as we live for Him, God will continue moving us in new directions. I contend that, (that is change!) Change is needed to fulfill our purpose here on earth. We should understand that He's working all things together for our good. Whether we like it or not change is constant and inevitable.

18 Jinwright, *Rise Up: Breaking Free into Anointed Living*: 34.

19 Paul S. Morton *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*: (Nashville TN, Abingdon Pres 2012s), 1.

Bishop Morton who I consider and so do many others is a pioneer of twenty first century change. Somewhere around 1993 and 1994 Bishop Morton a traditional Baptist minister was led to step out of his comfort zone by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He was led to, and founded the Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship. This was not to be a denomination or another clique but a fellowship that would embrace those that were total believers of the full Gospel (the Bible.) In those days and even to this day some traditional African American churches and in particular AARC's don't believe in such things as speaking in tongues, laying on of hands, and anointing in oil. So came the name *Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship*. Bishop Morton says he was led to start a fellowship that embraced the entire Gospel from cover to cover. In his book he describes the first annual conference held in the summer of 1994 at the Louisiana Superdome where there were some twenty-five thousand people in attendance. Bishop Morton says: "God had spoken clearly and definitively: this sovereign move of His Spirit was for such a time as this."²⁰ Bishop Morton goes on to advise that not long after the great start things began to change. "The team of leaders that was formed in the beginning, as time progressed because of differences of theological beliefs, some were able to get past those but others weren't able to get past certain church traditions. "I had to stand firm because I knew what God had called me to do."²¹ "God's assignment for the Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship was to change forward, not retreat back into what we had always known."²²

20 Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*: 2.

21 Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*: 2.

22 Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*: 2.

A little over two years after the fellowship was formed Bishop Morton says: “God shook the ranks of leadership.”²³ Some of his close associates left the fellowship. “I started doing damage control to avoid other colleagues when I realized that leaving people in key roles who I knew didn’t fully support the cause would ultimately result in more problems.”²⁴ He goes on to say that at the time he didn’t realize it but the initial team of leaders was put together to start the movement, but that it was never God’s plan for everyone that started initially to remain. I guess you could compare that to an airplane going somewhere but has to stop before reaching its final destination. At that stop some people get off and others get on. The ones that deboard the plane at the first stop were never designed to go to the final destination. Those that get on at that stop were originally designed to go to the final destination. So it is with not only Bishop Morton but with leaders in general. I believe that when vision is implemented and change takes place, there are those that are to go to a certain point, then there are those that will join along the way, and then there are those who were destined from the beginning to go all the way to the end. The above does not hold true in all transitions. In some cases everybody remains throughout the entire journey; however there will be times that God allows some to remain through seasons. Just as there’s a winter, spring, summer, and fall, there can be seasons in ministry and after a person’s season is up the leader can no longer shepherd them, and they can no longer follow the leader. Mind you that the situations listed above are being mentioned to make us aware of things that can and have happened, but may not happen in every transition in ministry.

23 Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God’s Unlimited Power*: 3.

24 Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God’s Unlimited Power*: 2.

Bishop says that he was called to change a generation. Along the way he has certainly faced opposition. However, it is very important that we remember that when God gives vision he also makes provision. As I have mentioned and will continue to emphasize there is nothing easy about change.

People become complacent with a certain way of doing things and it's hard to get them to do it any other way. However, Bishop Morton's transition was not only faced with opposition because of tradition but it also came down to interpretation of the Gospel. There were three major struggles that we had in establishing the Full Gospel: "Holy Ghost, Bishops, and the role of women in church leadership."²⁵ The role of women in the church has always faced opposition and still faces opposition today in some arenas. Most of those that oppose use I Corinthians 14:34 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law"²⁶ (KJV).

It's astonishing how people will use scripture when it suits them. I believe if God could use a woman to carry his only son, then he can use a woman in any role he so chooses in the church. Many people tend to forget that God is sovereign (the supreme ruler).

Bishop Morton went on to lead the Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship successfully for the next twenty-five years. He retired in July 2015 as the Founding Bishop of the FGBF and passed the mantle on to Bishop Joseph Walker III who is now the presiding Bishop of the successful fellowship of which Bishop Morton is still very active. These type transitions have taken place in other reformations all over the country.

²⁵ Morton, *Changing Forward: Experiencing God's Unlimited Power*, 157.

²⁶ I Cor 14:34 (KJV)

Change is a state of mind. Transforming a church requires a change of mind and attitude. In many respects, the members are the most crucial parts of the church and the most critical to the change process (see Rom. 12:1-8; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-12).²⁷

²⁷ Phillip V. Lewis, *Transformational Leadership: A New Model For Total Church Involvement* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers 1996,) 125.

CHAPTER TWO-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In a book entitled *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church*, Jeffery L. Tribble Sr. talks about the difficulties of transforming a traditional established African American Church. He advises that God must be in the transformation or it won't work. He also tells of a male pastor in a Transforming Traditional Church. The bible is clear as it relates to who must initiate and *and some pastors* complete the transformation. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelist; and some teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:..."¹

Tribble tells of a church Christopher Temple an African American middle-class church pastored by Rev. Walter Harrison Sr. Rev Harrison says, "I am now clear that the black church must do the community development in our community... We must teach spiritual development and economic development unapologetically!"² This statement derived from a statement Pastor Harris heard his U.S. congressman make as it related to public investment dollars, "we can't be satisfied until the East Side looks like the West Side."³ Tribble goes on to advise that the accomplishments of this church took a lot of prayer and about five years but they made it. The church posted on its property 'God Did It,' this is the evidence that transformation can take place but it must be with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

1 Ephesians 4:11-12 (NKJV)

2 Phillip V. Lewis, *Transformational Leadership: A New Model For Total Church Involvement* (Nashville, TN Broadman & Holman Publishers 1996,) 24.

3 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Chu: 24rch.*

The statement *God Did It* is a witness to God's transforming grace by Pastor Harrison and the people. It is also an expression of Christopher Temple's theological belief that God was at work in the world that they were called to be instruments of God's work, and that God was deserving of the glory and credit as they participated in practices of religious and social ministry. With Reverend Harrison at the head of the ministry, *God Did It* can also be taken as an icon representing the transformative pastoral leadership over his fifteen –year pastoral tenure.

Rev. Harrison's wife says: "I believe the reason my husband had that sign posted was because he wanted people to know that Christopher Temple stands as a beacon of light. He wanted people to know that there was no way in the world that man could take credit for what God did in terms of how this property became available through the prayers of the church, the fasting and through the conversation, wanting something positive to happen on that corner for the children, the next generation...It's a reaffirmation of what God is doing in our lives, not only because of that building, the brick and mortar, but in our lives, spiritually, God is doing it."⁴

In order for there to be successful, transformation in the African American rural church a new vision of black pastoral leadership is needed in this twenty-first century. This is a time when many denominational black congregations are struggling to fulfill their traditional priestly and prophetic functions in communities that really need the spiritual and social services that such congregations provide. The priestly function involves worship and maintaining the spiritual life of the membership, while the prophetic function, includes the classical motion of pronouncing the radical word of

4 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 24.

God's judgment; also it includes the church's involvement in the political concerns and activities of the broader community.

The priestly function which involves worship is clearly found in John 4:24. "*God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.*"⁵ If people are spiritually asleep, you almost have to frighten them, shock them or even scandalize them if you really want them to listen. This was one of Jesus' specialties. When he wanted to teach us something about worship he used a woman with five husbands. "Go call your husband! "I don't have a husband." "That's right. But you've had five, and the man you sleep with now is not your husband."⁶ She was shocked. However, Jesus sits there on the edge of the well ready to teach the woman about worship. We must always remember that there is nothing mystical about worship. Worship is real!

The twenty-first century black church is being transformed internally and externally. In the past the social crisis in the black community placed burdens on the black church. It is noted that respected observers of American congregational life believe that it is far more challenging to be an effective pastor today than it was in the past. Today like in the past, the black church must continue its tradition of adapting to its new surroundings, while not straying from the grace of God. God has always been the backbone on which the black church has depended. Back during slavery African Americans attended what was known as the invisible church. It was called the invisible church because services were held late at night and way out in the woods when the slave masters were asleep and couldn't see or hear how the slaves worshipped and praised God. So the black church in some areas should change their method while keeping the message

5 Jn 4:24 (NKJV)

6 Jn 4:18 (NKJV)

the same. It is very possible that knowledge of the invisible church is the reason that there is so much resistance to change and structure in the AARC now.

Therefore African American pastoral leaders trying to transform their congregations must cooperate with God's work of transforming the Church, and the people of God. This is very important if the black church is to be successful in fulfilling its mission in the world. Transformative pastoral leadership literally means spiritual leaders who are intentionally working to transform people, churches, and communities.

Spiritual leaders are men and women who've been called by God within the context of their individual faith communities to lead the people of God to fulfill His mission here on earth. They are chosen to carry out the Great Commission, by way of delegation as well as individually.

Those who are elected to the office of pastor take on the pastoral vocation in a special way. They attempt to strengthen the people of God by way of the Word of God and administering the Sacraments. When remembering who they are as pastors it reminds everyone that God is the source and the strength of their lives. Being called by God, using the gifts He has given them, and of course their preparation, they are chosen to speak to and for the faith community.

I believe that the concept of transformative pastoral leadership comes through the pastoral office. However it can't be accomplished by the pastor alone. Laywomen and laymen are empowered by the Spirit to be hearers, believers, and doers of God's Word. Laity along with the pastor must spend time fasting and praying, as they seek God's vision of transformation for the congregants, their church, and their community. Transformative pastoral leaders must involve laity as they attempt this transformation,

this way laity are not made to feel ignorant and or useless. So often, pastors go to a church attempting transformation without understanding who they are. They fail to ask questions, and gain the trust of the congregation or the community. This in and of itself creates unnecessary problems simply because they try to spend authority that they have yet to earn. This isn't saying that changes aren't in order. They may very well be, however the pastor must show interest in the people and the community before trying to make any changes. There must be interaction with the people to determine their individual needs as well as their needs as a congregation. People are more likely to accept change if they know that the pastor's concerns are genuine.

PREPARING FOR VISION

Those Leaders who God chooses for transformation must have vision which comes directly from God. Vision is not just a destination, it's a journey."⁷ God is doing a new thing in the world today. Preparation is a major part of vision. Vision is not just a product; it is a process. Vision is not just about reaching the finish line it's about the entire race. "Any business guru can tell you that research and development is a major part of producing a winning product."⁸ Paul was very clear in reference to vision when he penned these words: "No eye hath seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." I Corinthians 2:9. In order for us to see God's vision, hear God's voice, and conceive God's plan, we must spend much time preparing.

⁷ Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* Grand Rapids MI: (Zondervan 1999), 20.

⁸ Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change*: 21.

We have plans but God has vision. I believe this verse speaks to today's church. *"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."*⁹ In this twenty-first century our churches have many, many plans, and have numerous programs and multifaceted ministries. Never before has the church attempted to offer so much.

I imagine the question is what is vision? In Henry Blackaby's study, *Experiencing God* he advises that vision is: "see what God is doing and join Him, vision is a picture of what God wants to do."¹⁰ It can also be described as what God will do if we will leave it to Him and get out of the way. So we must join God in His plan and be the vessel that He uses to accomplish to bring His vision to fruition.

To really understand and process vision let's look at Nehemiah. Nehemiah was one of the most vision minded leaders in the Bible. First of all he accomplished one of the most amazing feats in the Bible, rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Secondly, the book of Nehemiah gives step-by-step process of vision. If we are to biblically transition our churches we can certainly take a page from Nehemiah's book. Here are five steps Nehemiah used in processing his vision and we must do the same.

1. Collect Information

Nehemiah spoke with those who had firsthand knowledge concerning the conditions in Jerusalem. Vision at its best is borne through knowledge. Nehemiah found out all he could, he studied the situation and circumstances very closely. Nehemiah understood the importance of being familiar with your vision:

The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They

9 Proverbs 19:21 (KJV)

10 Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change*: 22.

said to me to me, those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.¹¹

Contrary to the belief of some, it is not unspiritual to gather all the information you can prior to moving forward with vision. It is okay to study; to complete basic research thinking is allowed. We must think and listen in order to get clear instructions as to how God wants us to move forward with vision.

One important part of this transition will be reaching the unchurched in the community. Many pastors to include myself say that all we have to do is preach the word. That statement is partially true. Yes, we must have good Biblical preaching to lead people to Christ, but if good preaching alone was all we needed to win the world to Christ, the job would be completed. One main visionary of the early church (Paul) said,

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under the law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.¹²

Paul knew what it would take to win others because he studied them, and collected all the information he could about those he was trying to lead to Christ. Never make the mistake of thinking you know all there is to know about the unchurched people in the community. You will probably be surprised at what you find out if you take the time to research.

The next thing we need to do in transition is to reach the unchurched. One thing to remember is that when you're trying to accomplish something new you have to seek out people who've been successful at what you're trying to do. Many people claim they

11 Neh. 1:1-3 (NKJV)

12 I Cor. 9:19 -23(NKJV)

know how to do something but don't have anything to show for it. Collecting information is the first step of preparation for vision because you need to understand the people you're trying to reach.

2. Holy Discontent with the Status Quo

Nehemiah's life was changed forever after learning of the conditions in Jerusalem. "When I heard these things, I sat down and wept."¹³ Nehemiah was torn because the walls were down and had been down for years, and he felt a spiritual unrest with this information. Nehemiah's heart was heavy. In fact God permitted Nehemiah to feel about Jerusalem the way he did. He was heartbroken over the desolate condition of the people in Jerusalem. One thing to remember is that the burden and heartache that Nehemiah felt wasn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact it was a good thing. "There is one major principle in transitioning, and that is that vision is usually birthed out of heartache and burden."¹⁴ "Jesus wept over the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6). Moses stood in the gap for the Israelites (Exodus 17:4). Jeremiah wept over the burden he carried (Jeremiah 3:21)."¹⁵

As long as we are satisfied with things the way they are we will never understand or know God's heart as it relates to His vision. As long as we are comfortable with the same old mundane ways we will never catch a hold of God's vision. If we remain in the boat we will never be able to walk on water. God will never speak if we don't seek what he would have us do. If we are more concerned about upsetting the norm than bombarding the gates of hell we will never be empowered with the power God has for us to carry out his plan in our churches. Vision often comes when we are at our most desperate time.

¹³ Neh. 1:4a (NKJV).

¹⁴ Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change*: 29

¹⁵ Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change*: 29

God gives us his vision when we are desperate. He speaks to us when we sell out to him, when our heart, souls, body, and minds are stayed on him he speaks. When we really seek his face we find him. Jesus said it like this: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”¹⁶ I honestly believe that one major reason we don’t get God’s vision for our churches is that we are satisfied with business as usual. Vision has to be accompanied by a passion that doing things the good old way is not going to work.

3. Fasting

“For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”¹⁷ For several days Nehemiah fasted and prayed. Fasting in many of our churches is unheard of even though it was practiced throughout the bible. Old Testament fasting was practiced for humility¹⁸, as a form of confession:

O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against you.¹⁹

Not only did Nehemiah fast but he prayed for many months. He covered his vision in prayer from beginning to end. This is how he ended his prayer: “O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight

16 Matt. 5:6 (NKJV).

17 Neh. 1:4b (NKJV).

18 Ezra 8:21 (NKJV)

19 Neh. 1:5-6 (NKJV).

in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”²⁰

One problem we have with catching God’s vision is hearing his voice. We are often so busy doing other things that sometimes hardly matter that we have trouble sitting still long enough to hear his voice. David realized the importance of sitting still long enough to hear from God. “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”²¹ Psalm 46:10. There is specific order to what David did, we must first be still, and second we will be able to know him and what he wants us to do, and finally God will be exalted as his vision comes to fruition. Many times church leaders suffer from the Elijah syndrome. “Elijah had followed God long enough to see God do some pretty incredible things (food a la raven, flour that never is used up, raising the widow's son from the dead, stopping the rain for three and a half years, calling down fire on the false prophets, and some other things.”²² Elijah syndrome is being so busy doing big things for God that we fail to really seek God’s face as it relates to what he really wants us to do. There is a problem with not spending time in prayer to hear from God, and it is simple. Those who talk to God hear from him, and those who don’t talk to him don’t hear from him. The main hindrance to prayers not being answered is prayers not being prayed.

There is a major relationship between vision and prayer. One example of vision and prayer is found in Jeremiah 29:11-13. Here is found the progression of the promise in

²⁰ Neh. 1:11 (NKJV).

²¹ Ps. 46:10 (NKJV).

²² Southerland *Transitioning Leading Your Church Through Change*: 35

those verses. “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”²³ That sounds like a plan, God has a plan and it’s a good plan. God’s plan is to prosper his people. We need not fear God’s plan because it is designed to give us hope and a solid future. How do we find the plan? “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”²⁴ There are promises all throughout the Bible that are conditional. Here verse 11 is on the condition of verse 12 and that is that we pray. Finally verse 13 gives us the details of the condition. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”²⁵ If we want to find God’s true vision for our churches as well as our individual lives with we must seek him with our whole heart.

Vision is usually given to those who seek it until they find it. If prayer doesn’t fuel our vision, our vision will stall like an automobile that is out of fuel, and our churches will do the same it won’t go anywhere. A leader cannot do vision on their own. Prayer is the main prerequisite. There is no shortcut to vision. We must pray if we want to know God’s vision for his church, because God gives vision to people of prayer.

There were behind the scenes waiting in Nehemiah’s process. First, the wall in Jerusalem was down for seventy years. Secondly, Nehemiah had been a servant to the king for twenty years. Waiting is of the essence here. Even when Nehemiah got started with his vision there were four months that passed. Nehemiah 1:1 occurs in “Kislev, which is the Persian name for December. Nehemiah 2:1 occurs in “Nisan” (the Persian

²³ Jer. 29:11 (NKJV).

²⁴ Jer. 29: 12 (NKJV).

²⁵ Jer. 29: 12 (NKJV).

word for April). Nehemiah took no action during this four month period, it's simple. He waited! Vision is usually given to those who wait patiently for it. Isaiah 40:31 says: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."²⁶ Habakkuk says in Habakkuk 2:2-3 And the Lord answered me, and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."²⁷ Most people hate to wait and I'm no exception to that rule. I'll never forget my years in the United States army it seemed that all we did was hurry up and wait. I hated that with a passion. The problem in our churches and even in our world, we hate to wait. We live in a microwave society we want everything in a hurry. Even our congregants have the mentality that we can have instant maturity. It seems they want to go from being in the valley one day to the mountain top the next. While we know God is able to do things just that fast, there is usually waiting in the process. We do the same thing as leaders we seem to think we can ask God for vision one day to having it come to fruition the next. There are very few of us that enjoy waiting however, waiting is a prerequisite to not only a vision coming to pass, but preparing for it as well.

We have to wait on God's will. Here is a working definition of God's will: "doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right motive at the right time."²⁸ The importance

²⁶ Hab. 2:2 (NKJV)

²⁷ Hab. 2:3 (NKJV)

²⁸ Southerland, *Transitioning Leading Your Church through Change*: 39.

of waiting is so important you can compare it to baseball. The difference in a long foul ball and a homerun is timing. Sometimes we have to wait even though we don't want to.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done when receiving and completing God's vision. One thing a leader must do is collect information about the community where your church is. We must separate ourselves from tradition in our churches in order to complete proper transition. We have to fast, pray and wait.

DEFINING THE VISION

Leaders involved in the transformation of a church must be willing to ask some tough questions. One requirement for laboring in new territory is the ability to question the status quo. While the first step in this process is preparation the next step requires asking questions, and also finding the answers. Nehemiah in chapter one deals with preparation. But something happens in the four month time lapse between chapters one and two. In the first chapter he is worried about Jerusalem but had no specific plan. In chapter two he has the plan in place. There is something that happened in this place. Nehemiah moved from preparation to definition. As leaders we must do the same. We have to lead the church to be purpose driven.

Purpose driven is a term that was made popular in the book *The Purpose Driven Church* by Dr. Rick Warren the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. Dr. Warren advises that a church should have purpose and in doing so will be driven by that purpose to growth spiritually, numerically, and financially.²⁹

We as leaders must seek God for his specific vision for the church where we are assigned. I believe that God has a specific church, for the specific pastor, with a specific

29 Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* Grand Rapids MI: (Zondervan, 2002), 41

vision. I believe God wants to give all of his church's specific leadership in the area of vision. Some of those specifics would include what he wants done, when he wants it done, and instructions on how to do it. Our churches won't become purpose driven until we have the answers to those questions. Peter Drucker has been called the father of modern American management. Drucker is probably best known for the two questions he most often uses. The first is: "What business are we in? How's business?"³⁰

There are three steps that every church must take in order to totally understand God's vision. Those three have to do with purpose, target, and strategy. Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Church* is the most thorough information I've read concerning purpose, target, and strategy. I'm of the opinion that Rick Warren is one of God's best during this season. I believe every leader should read this book. The first thing to do when defining vision is:

1. Discover Your Purpose

Many churches today are dealing with not knowing what their purpose is. Many churches have yet to understand why they do what they do. If the church does not discover why they do what they do they are in danger of becoming institutions with little or no life at all, and their only purpose will be to survive. Jesus is very clear about his vision for the church: "I will build my church; and the powers all hell shall not prevail against it of".³¹ That is definitely more than survival; it sounds more like a church with purpose. I believe purpose is the first issue when it comes to vision. The biggest question needing to be answered is what God wants us to do. Another way to put it is what business are we in? One of the biggest arguments you'll get is if you ask church members

³⁰ Southerland, *Transitioning Your Church Through Change*: 44.

³¹ Matt. 16:18 (TLB).

what the purpose of their church is. There will be such answers as preaching, evangelizing, caring for the fellowship, taking care of the widows and the orphans, some might even say keeping the traditions of the church alive. These will be stated in different ways but are sure to make the list. There are 485,000 churches in the United States today, and God has a specific purpose for them all.

Vision is much like a jigsaw puzzle. You work a puzzle one piece at a time and it takes quite a while to get all the pieces in order. Every puzzle has a border and discovering purpose is like the border of a puzzle. Your church's puzzle will frame the rest of the vision. It need not be difficult to find, to see, or to put together. This frustration has been a part of the equation time and time again for churches all over the world. There's an old saying *you can't take the cart before the horse*. Well that saying is fitting here in that you can't determine your target or your strategy until you discover your purpose. In other words, try to determine ministries and programs without first knowing what God wants you to do as a church. You will become very irritated and see very little fruit if any at all. Many churches have purpose statements (mission statements) and it's a good thing to have. However, a purpose statement doesn't have to be long. In my opinion, if you can't state the purpose of your church in a single sentence you probably haven't discovered your purpose. "There are four characteristics of a good purpose statement. A good purpose statement is **biblical**. The Bible is our source of direction. A good purpose statement is **practical**. That means that it is written in simple, understandable, everyday terms. A good purpose statement is **transferable**. This simply means it can be passed easily and naturally from one person to the next. A good purpose statement is **short**. Short means the goal is to be able to remember it, not to have to read

it, a good acrostic worth using here for the four characteristics of a good purpose statement is KISSSS, which means keep it scriptural, simple, shareable, and short!”³²

The second thing necessary is to:

2. Define your target.

Determining your purpose just may be the most difficult part of defining God’s vision. Probably the most misunderstood part of vision is defining the target. The question in business jargon would be “Who is our primary customer?” There are several questions to ask but I believe the three most important are:

- a. Who is our immediate community?**
- b. Who is our primary target?**
- c. Who has God put in this community that we are best equipped to reach?**

Now just as there are important questions to ask there are a few you don’t want to ask and they are:

- d. Who do we want to reach?**
- e. Who are we already reaching?**

There are three realities of targeting that are true in most churches, when you aim at nothing, you hit nothing every time. “When you aim at everything, you hit nothing most of the time, and when you try to reach everyone, you reach no one most of the time.”³³

No church reaches everyone. As much as we would like to reach everyone it’s literally impossible to do so. That is why God being all sovereign has allowed 485,000

³² Southerland, *Transforming Your Church Through Change*: 49.

³³ Southerland, *Transforming Your Church Through Change*: 49.

churches in America to reach 485,000 different local communities of people. Each community reaches different people. That's the reason no church has to covet another churches members. There are enough people for everybody. "The harvest is truly plenteous harvest"³⁴

We are teammates not competition. We are all on the same team with one common goal and that is to defeat the enemy. We strive to do this by winning souls. The more souls we can lead to Christ, the enemies camp becomes smaller, and smaller. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."³⁵ Many of our leaders today have forgotten what we are all about. Many of them struggle with the same Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing and there being territorial. I conclude that the reason for that is that our target and purpose have been misplaced. It's all about Jesus. "I came to seek and to save that which was lost."³⁶ There are several examples throughout scripture that support defining one's target. Paul's target was the Gentiles. "I am the apostle to the Gentiles."³⁷ Peter's target was the Jews. Paul confirmed this: "I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews."³⁸ "James's target was the Jews who were being persecuted. He addressed his book to the twelve tribes

34 Matt. 9:37 (KJV).

35 I Cor. 1:10 (KJV).

36 Lk 19:10 (ASV).

37 Rom 11:13 (KJV).

38 Gal 2:7 (NLT).

scattered among the nations.”³⁹ Jeremiah’s target was the king and the people of Judah. God sent Jeremiah “to the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land.”⁴⁰ Even Jonah had a reluctant target: the backslidden people of Nineveh. God told Jonah “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.”⁴¹ Targeting for evangelism begins with finding out all you can about your community. “Your church needs to define its target in four specific ways: geographically, demographically, culturally, and spiritually.”⁴² First, you must define your target **geographically**. You probably won’t reach a lot of Charlotteans if your church is not in Charlotte. Warren says that there are a few exceptions but for the most part your church’s immediate target will be five to ten miles around your church. These numbers expand somewhat in rural settings. The area will grow slightly as your church grows. Your church’s immediate target in driving time should be approximately fifteen minutes. Mega churches draw from larger areas while small rural churches draw from smaller areas. However, Warren says in both cases the majority of your congregants will come from close by. Secondly, Warren says to define your target **demographic**. The best way to do this is to describe the community around you. The more you know about the area the better off you are. The third way Warren suggest you define your target is **culturally**. Knowing the culture is very important. You must address the culture if you want to be effective. In this day and time many different cultures and subcultures can exist in the same community. We have to be diverse enough to meet the need of all that

39 Jas 1:1 (NKJV).

40 Jer 1:18 (KJV)

41 Jonah 1:2 (NLT).

42 Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*: Grand Rapids MI: (Zondervan, 1995), 159.

reside in the community. Finally, Warren says to define your target **spiritually**. Many times we fail to address this area when in essence it is a very important area to target.

Mr. Warren suggests that there are at least four spiritual target groups in every community: **The lost that are unchurched**. These are people who do not know Christ and they don't belong to any church. **The Christians that are unchurched**. These could really be called dechurched people. They were active in church at one time or the other in their life. **The New Christians**. These are those that know Christ but are very immature. Church in and of itself is basically new to them. Finally, **Mature Christians**, these believers have known Christ for a long time and they do attend church. Most churches would have you believe that their church's target is reaching out to the lost. However, a close look at how things are done would reveal that their target is actually mature Christians. We must focus on the target that God has given us.

3. Decide your strategy.

Mr. Warren says that often times churches make two mistakes when it comes to target. The second common mistake is that they are driven by events rather than driven by process in their strategy. If there will be strategy to match our purpose and target we must ask and answer these questions: comes to strategy. The first mistake is that they define strategy before defining purpose

What process will accomplish our purpose and reach our target?

How do we move from where we are to where we want to go?

What must change?

What must not change?

What is the best order of change?

Defining vision is the slowest process and seems to take the longest. But each church must take the time to discover its purpose, define its target, and determine its strategy in this order.

The AARC in a lot of cases lack any of the above. Not saying there's anything wrong with what's being done but I believe with more structure and less traditionalism the mission and vision that God has for us would be easier to accomplish.

CHAPTER THREE-LITERATURE REVIEW

The African American Missionary Baptist Church as a denomination has a rich history, and is very proud of its legacy. The African American Missionary Baptist Church is autonomous and basically stands alone, therefore it is able to make individual decisions if it so chooses. This project is focused mainly in the area of the AARC which I have had the pleasure of pastoring. These churches tend to be smaller churches and usually don't follow the status quo. Therefore, this literature review will address African American church administration from the African American perspective in the rural church, better church structure, and leading a church through change.

Information on my project in particular is very hard to come by. Not many have written on struggles as it relates to the African American rural church. However, there is quite a bit found as it relates to transitioning a church through change which is largely what my thesis attempts to do. The information I chose was chosen because it supports my theory as it relates to change or transformation being needed. While there is not a lot mentioned pertaining to the African American rural church in particular there is information on the African American small church which is a characteristic of a lot of AARCs.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH ADMINISTRATION (In the Rural Church)

“Floyd Massey and Samuel Berry highlight the distinctive character of church administration in African American congregations in the book *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*. Both these authors Floyd Massey and Samuel Berry McKinney are pastors who for three years participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Program of Black

Church Studies at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminaries, Rochester, New York. They had specific goals in mind:

1. To “equip the saints for the work of ministry” Ephesians 4:12, RSV).

Leadership by education and training; integration without preparation equals frustration.

2. To “set at liberty them that are bound.” (Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18)

Liberation that secures jobs, housing, education, human rights, i.e., the breaking of all *fetters*.

3. “To serve the present age, My calling to fulfill...”

Flexibility to adapt to location, lifestyle, working and living conditions; the existential nature of decisions people must make.

4. “And O, Thy servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give.”

Accountability for all that is administratively entrusted to one’s keeping; assuming responsibility for one’s commitments.

5. To reveal the glory of the Lord that “all flesh shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:5)

“Sound church administration, demanding excellence at every level of participation and sensitive to human needs resulting in a meaningful future for black children of God.”¹

¹ Massey, Floyd, McKinney, Samuel Berry *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*, (Valley Forge, Judson Press 1976,) 9.

When this book was printed there were approximately twelve million black Baptists in the United States. Following is a chart that breaks down this estimation by conventions. Not included are the Primitive Baptists and those churches belonging to no convention.

Table 1.1 Breakdown of Baptist Churches in US (According to the Convention)

<u>Name of Organization</u>	<u>No. of Churches</u>	<u>Constituent Membership</u>
National Baptist Convention of America	10,000	3,000,000
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.	30,000	8,000,000
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.	1,000	1, 000, 000

Source: Data from Church Administration and the Black Perspectives by Floyd Massey and Samuel Berry McKinney

Howard W. Thurman, religious philosopher and black church father, speaks to the question of Baptist denomination being the most popular among the slaves, standing today at the numerical top among black churches:

I can think of one or two things that are important...it has a tradition of freedom. There is so much local autonomy that any Baptist church can ordain its own men; it's not accountable to anybody beyond the congregation. I would say that its democratic practices in ordination account for the general appeal of the denomination. Not its religiosity, but the fact that in the Baptist denomination any man is as significant as any other. "Even the head man is no longer head man when the rest of us decide that he isn't and this would have special appeal to people who were terribly circumscribed everywhere else in the world."²

² Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 9,10.

“Baptist church administration is predetermined by its high degree of local church autonomy.”³ “It is an instrument of self-determination, and self-determination is part of the process of liberation.”⁴ It is from this perspective that clergy and laity are able to exercise power creatively and redemptively. The followers under this umbrella of Christ within the Afro American Church teaches its members to a point of capacity to make decisions and put them into action believing that they reach their destiny under God by these means. “It is in decision making, elections, budgets, and the creation of policies are some of the areas where this growth takes place. In them the saints are equipped for the task of ministry in and to the world.”⁵

Despite some of the recent gains economically in the Afro American community, the black church is made up largely of a group of poverty-stricken people who lack the financial resources , and power to change the condition they’re in. However, the community still looks to the church to meet their needs. “The situation of the black church is similar to that of Jesus of Nazareth when confronted by five thousand hungry men with only five barley loaves and two small fish supplied by a little lad. (John 6:9).”⁶ The long-lasting problem of the Afro American church is facing a huge community with a countless number of issues and little or no resources to handle them. Those that do the Lord’s work in the African American Church do so with inadequate, scant, restricted, modest, insufficient, sparse, and skimpy means, and are overwhelmed by these odds. The feeding of the five thousand has in some ways been accomplished by the black church.

3 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 10.

4 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 10.

5 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 10.

6 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 10.

That which is left over in many instances has allowed the black church along with the community to hold it together body, soul, and mind!

Most administration in Black churches seems to be run by the grace of God and the mercy of the people, without adequate records, permanent paid employees....”We have lost many members on the basis that we never use them in the church structures unless they can be used for the personal benefit of the minister and of his administration.”⁷

Often times in the black church decisions cannot be based on rules, regulations, and tradition alone. The urgency of the situation often requires a pliancy to be led by the “Holy Spirit.” “The best of both worlds is possible in a style based upon definite rules, building into them a concept of flexibility.”⁸ “In seeking effective administration, it is assumed that human worth is paramount; affirming the Pauline admonition that all that is lawful is not expedient.”⁹

THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

The power and authority exercised in the African American church is given to the pastor by the congregation with God’s guidance, and God is the eternal head of the church. The pastor’s style directly affect whether the church is successful or not. The role of the pastor is so important because many seeking church membership often take a look at the pastor to see if they feel he’s been led by the Spirit. “

7 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 11.

8 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 11.

9 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 11.

The pastor is the ex-officio (the head, the undershepherd) because God called him, and the people hear God and call the pastor to lead their specific congregation. There are in some cases that the pastor's training and experience play a part. However in a lot of cases in the African American Rural church this is not of great importance. The reason is because a trained pastor brings structure that is often not accepted in these areas. However, I believe if people truly believe God sends a pastor then they must allow the pastor to pastor.

The late Dr. Gardner C. Taylor says "that the new minister becomes pastor as time moves on." When elected and installed, he is not truly pastor. "He becomes pastor as his ability becomes respected and he grows in the heart of the people."¹⁰ In the absence of a pastor the officers (Deacons) as one of the only two called offices in the church help lead. However, once a pastor is in place they (the deacons) release their power. The power to lead people is not naturally associated with the call. The privilege to lead comes with time and if misused it can be taken away.

SPIRITUAL LEADER

In West Africa, religious leaders were considered elders. "The elders' authority rested on a religious foundation because they represented the community before the ancestors, the living dead."¹¹ The respect that black preachers had in some quarters was carried over from the "African tradition that the chief had religious duties to perform as head of the clan."¹² "As head of the church the black minister's divine call mandated

10 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 33.

11 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

12 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

spiritual leadership to a people frustrated in earthly power.”¹³ In many ways that spiritual leadership had to be communicated by the preaching of the gospel in “basic black.”

“Basic black meant articulation in the black idiom”¹⁴ that lifted people from where they were to where they had to be.

This is a written statement given to Ira De A. Reid for his study of black Baptists:

It might be justly said that the Negro Baptists want a preacher who can reach the will of man through both his intellect and his feelings. However, if the preacher does not have a two-fold approach, the people will settle for one who has an emotional approach as the intellectual approach.¹⁵

In the African American tradition the black congregant has looked up to the pastor as a father figure regardless of the leader’s age. It is not unusual to hear an eighty year old mother of the church refer to the pastor as *father*. That fatherly image has come about because the leader is considered the shepherd. The shepherd protects, feeds, and also corrects the flock. For Afro Americans the pastor is the shepherd and the congregation is the flock. The building was referred to as the sheepfold.

The spiritual nature of this office called pastor has caused leaders to believe that they are servants of God, the people, and the community. “The desire to assume the role of servant has, however, been crushed by the people’s insistence that the pastor assume a stern and lofty role and demeanor.”¹⁶ “The servant often had to become the firm and strong master, neither servile nor subservient.”¹⁷

13 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

14 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

15 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

16 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

17 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 34.

The black preacher/pastor must build a solid foundation of spiritual leadership that validates his credentials. He is then able to follow the truth wherever it leads and can provide nourishment for the flock that the Lord has placed him in charge of.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER

The administrative style of the leader determines his or her failure as pastor. The style of the leader has had to fall in line with the pace of the congregation. In the black church it is not proper for persons to meet with officers or members without the pastor's knowledge."Likewise in the villages of West Africa, no one would go visit without first stopping by the home of the chief."¹⁸ This may appear to have some characteristics of a dictator style of leadership, but in the long run it minimizes chaos. When having programs or raising funds the pastor must be notified because these are two of many areas that the leader is held accountable, therefore, the black church has its own form of democracy. If a lay person or pastor has any issues considered to be out of order he or she is handled by the congregation.

Sandy F. Ray, said "that if a black Baptist pastor told the denominational leader his congregation would give a certain amount to an objective then it would be forthcoming, but if the pastor said he had to meet with officers, that meant the pastor was not planning to contribute."¹⁹ "Elliot Mason related that when he began his Los Angeles pastorate, the officers and members came to him to ask one question after another regarding every activity from the building program down to the uniforms for ushers."²⁰

18 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 37.

19 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 37.

20 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 37.

“They would not move until the pastor told them in what direction God was directing him, and much of this surprised him.”²¹ Pastor Mason soon realized that since they kept asking he had better answer. The black church on the whole demands that the pastor lead. However, this proves to be different from church to church especially in the small churches, and even more in small rural churches.

THE COMMUNITY LEADER

“The African chief attempted to meet the community’s spiritual and social needs by leading his community in its fight against evil.”²² “The needs of the African community were interpreted for “this world” and were not otherworldly in orientation, although West Africans believed in the afterlife in which they became ancestors.”²³

Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her seat in the 1950s was the shot heard worldwide, that was destined to wake up the sleeping “black giant” to seize the time. This struggle in Montgomery Alabama pushed Martin Luther King Jr., into fame and ultimately he became a martyr.

The pulpit in the black church is considered the only “free” pulpit in America; therefore black congregants expect judgment to take place in the church. The black preacher is supported solely by the people. This allows him to give without restraint his interpretation to the times as priest and prophet.

21 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 37.

22 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 38.

23 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 38.

“While Martin Luther King, Jr., holds a place of deep affection in the hearts of most prideful black Americans, it must be remembered that he was preceded by a great throng of unknown and unsung heroes of the faith, who made his thrust a reality.”²⁴

GENERAL OFFICERS

Deacons

Deacons along with the pastor are the only two scriptural officers in the church. Some deacons feel that they are spiritual fathers of the church, also elders who rule well as they serve and assist the pastor in leading the flock, and are loyal to the pastor and the church. Some of them are pressured to act differently, but they remain loyal.

On the other hand, there have been deacons along with other officers who felt it necessary to protect the congregation from the pastor. Others feel that they are the pastor's employer thus giving them the right to tell the pastor what to do.

Most deacons have come to understand the importance maintaining the integrity of the Lord's house. However, there are still those who have no intention of doing things biblically but the way they think it should be done. The bible is clear that the Lord will give us pastors that are after His own heart. The bible is also clear on why this office was established. While there is no mention of deacon it's clear that the first seven were chosen to assist the leaders so the widows wouldn't be neglected and the leaders/pastors could spend quality time in the word. In my experience this seems to work quite well when all involved acknowledge and respect each other.

Trustees

²⁴ Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 39.

“Many churches have, unfortunately, permitted the dichotomization of the type of persons to serve on the diaconate (boards of deacons and deaconesses) and on the board of trustees.”²⁵

The older thought was that spiritual matters were handled by the deacons while material things were dealt with by the trustees. In some instances there are issues that arise between the two boards. “It is to the dismay, disgust, and piques of many a black church trustee to learn that as the pastor and deacons go so goes the church.”²⁶ On the other hand many a pastor owe a great debt of sincere thanks to trustees who have given of themselves, their time and talent to care for the church above and beyond the call of duty.

Other Officers

Church clerks in some churches have been given a great deal of authority due to the personal records that the clerk is responsible for. “A church treasure and /or church financial secretary have had power, too, because it has been their responsibility to determine whose voucher would be honored and which debts and creditors would be paid at any given time.”²⁷

Power comes with money so those that handle it automatically have power as well.

Auxiliary Groupings

The African American church operates through small fellowship groups. These groups can be roughly divided into three classes: (1) Service Groups...such as choirs, usher boards, gospel choruses, flower guilds, etc.; (2) Fellowship Groups...such as men’s

25 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 40.

26 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 40.

27 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*: 41.

clubs women's auxiliaries, missionary societies, etc. ; (3) Interest Groups...such as church school, state organizations, age group circles, etc. These groups, in spite of my arbitrary categories, have as their primary mission the financial support of the institution. It is common for a single church to have twenty-five or thirty small bank accounts in as many banks in a major large city. Most often, each group is duplicated in an organization for children and youth. In a single church there will be a senior choir, a youth choir, and a children's choir. "This multiplicity of groups affords an opportunity for "everybody to be somebody."²⁸

The pastor has the task of trying to centralize all these treasures into one church treasure. This suggestion is often met with strong opposition, and over time has often led to the pastor's demise if the effort continues after the initial opposition.

I addressed the only two scriptural officers in the church as well as a few more just to give an idea of church administration from the Afro American perspective.

BETTER CHURCH STRUCTURE (In The Rural Church)

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I build my church" (Matt. 16:18). In the Old Testament when God called Abraham this was the beginning of the "people of faith." It didn't stop there Jesus followed by calling the "people of faith" into the Christian church. Karl Barth says that "the church is a "convoked" people. The church does not exist because someone decided to form an organization, but are called by God. When Jesus said, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of

28 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration*, 41.

them (Matt. 18:20), He was defining the essential element of the church; people called to be the church.²⁹

Paul refers to the church as “the body of Christ.” Paul goes on to emphasize the fact that as a physical body needs all its parts to function so it is with the church. Everybody has a part and all those parts need to function in order to complete the mission that God left us here to complete.

I dare not suggest that there’s anything wrong with the small church or a rural church. However, what I am suggesting and would like to discuss is the fact that structure is very important and would make better what is already good in the small rural African American Church. Proverbs (29:18) says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”³⁰ If the church has no clear vision with order and structure it is doomed. A church without a vision will be in disarray and incapable of lasting growth.

The small church often operates with volunteers due to a lack of funds to pay any office staff. There is no problem with that but often times you don’t find the most qualified to volunteer. However the small church pastor must allow and enable the volunteers to succeed. It is less difficult for a volunteer staff to be successful in a small church because of the deep commitment the members have to the church. The pastor should never try to go it alone because this will do nothing but damage the church. Programs or ministries that the pastor envisions should be placed in the hands of the volunteer leadership. The pastor should train and equip the volunteer staff in the areas of ministry needed. The pastor’s role as an enabler is to encourage the laypersons to fulfill

29 Doran McCarty, *Leading the Small Church*: (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, Press, 1991) 12.

30 Proverbs 29:18 (NKJV)

their opportunities.³¹ Laypersons tend to wait for permission to serve, however the pastor should present opportunities for them to serve, and in most cases will be met with an eagerness to serve. The pastor should always have the resources to assist when called upon. Another helpful thing is to celebrate each accomplishment. Some celebration needs to be done privately and some openly. Whatever way make that person know that they are appreciated.

More than 80 percent of churches in the United States have plateaued or are declining.³² Just a visit to these churches and you can see why many churches fail to cater to the needs of the community and they are not aware that they're not working in a spirit of excellence.

“We need to strive for excellence and care about our church property, programming and publicity because God deserves our best.”³³ The local church is God’s local franchise within the community. We represent God and the bible declares that we are ambassadors, as we introduce others to Him. When we do anything in any way other than a spirit of excellence we certainly don’t represent him well. Remember, after God created everything he looked at it and said, “It is good!”³⁴ “When we offer mediocre music, have unfriendly ushers and ho-hum services, and then present ourselves as a reflection of God’s love and character, we insult him.”³⁵

31 Doran, *Leading The Small Church*: 132.

32 Stan Toler, Alan Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*, (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1999), 20.

33 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church, Serving God and His People With Excellence*, 21.

34 Gen. 1:31

35 Toler, Nelson, 21. *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His people With Excellence*: 21.

Another reason for pursuing a ministry of excellence is because God commanded us to go and make disciples of all people. Quality is very important in this day and time, in attracting people but also keeping them. It is one thing to get them there today but we must have what it takes to keep them coming back week after week, month after month, and year after year. The Great Commission requires that we do whatever possible to win someone to Christ. We need to discover the boundaries and do what God has asked us to do. We must love God in order to have a sincere willingness to serve people. Otherwise it will not be of God.

“Excellence is also important because people are impressed with quality care. One of the best ways to raise the level of church-attendee commitment is presenting an orientation of excellence.”³⁶ When we half do things people are less likely to become a part of it.

Toler and Nelson refer to this process as customer-oriented ministry, and this must be a mindset. He advises that “without it, we are doomed to stay as we are, or worse to fail. “The bottom line is that as our culture changes, we must respond to its needs differently.”³⁷ If we don’t address it differently we will eventually be forced to close the doors.

“Every organization in the world is facing significant changes created by a multitude of influences.”³⁸ Although our existing message should remain the same our method of delivery must change. We can’t do things the way we did them in the 50s, 60s,

36 Toler Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His people With Excellence*: 21-22.

37 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*, 22

38 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His people With Excellence*: 22.

80s, or even the 90s. The 21st century is upon us and we must address the changes that we face on a day to day basis. “A customer-service, market-oriented church will be constantly changing so that it will stay fresh, healthy and vibrant as an organization, as well as to its mission to honor God and reach people.”³⁹

Jesus stressed helping others, and this only came second to loving God. One way we love others is week seek to meet their needs and serve them in any way possible.

If we believe the Bible which instructs us to be of service to others out of our love for God, and that people are going to spend life after death in hell if we fail to evangelize, then we must continuously find modern methodologies to win souls to the Kingdom. The Church is a service-oriented organization. “We function to help people find relationships, answers, and to link up with appropriate resources.”⁴⁰

To focus on the customer simply means meeting the needs of the people. Most churches are set up to serve the people already apart of the church. “The more a congregation considers its people customers, the more likely it is to develop a broader range of ministries to relate to varying needs, interests and priorities.”⁴¹

Pastors are not able to do it by themselves. The pastor must seek lay leaders who are capable of assisting in casting the vision for a customer orientation.

“Without this emphasis by leaders, you may as well quit. Close this book and stick it on your bookshelf until you have an idea of who might carry the burden.”⁴² “That

39 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His people With Excellence*: 22.

40 Nelson, *The Five Toler Star Church: Serving God and His people With Excellence*: 23.

41 Toler Nelson,, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*: 24

42 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*: 26.

may seem abrupt and even cynical, but unless those who have influence grasp the burden to develop a service-oriented church, it ain't gonna happen.”⁴³

LEADING A CHURCH THROUGH CHANGE

Change is difficult to deal with no matter where you are, however it seem to be especially difficult in the church. This appears to be the case especially when you've done something a certain way for years and now here comes this leader who suggest change.

“The Negro minister needs to know and do more than preach and pray. He must be possessed of public spirit and have the capacity to cooperate in educational and other social movements which promise present as well as prospective salvation. He must fit himself to preach and also to practice the scripture that hath the promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come.”⁴⁴ ---Du Bois *The Negro Church*

“On February 8, 2003 talk show host Tavis Smiley, convened a conference that was called *The Black Church: Relevant, Repressive, or Reborn?*”⁴⁵ “Some of the most trusted and best-known spiritual leaders of the black church serving in the church and academy were invited to participate.”⁴⁶ The question was: Has the black church, our very help in our times of trouble renounced its responsibility on the most serious issues of our time? “These issues include war, poverty, HIV/AIDS.”⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, this telecast

43 Toler, Nelson, *The Five Star Church: Serving God and His People With Excellence*: 26.

44 Jeffrey L. Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: New York NY: (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005,) 3.

45 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 3.

46 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 3.

47 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 3.

provoked numerous conversations as blacks talked among themselves in black churches, around seminary lunch tables, in barbershops, and in beauty parlors across the country.

At the start of the twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois's of pastoral ministry was indicative of the historically prominent role of black Christian pastors in mobilizing people for mission in the public arena as well as in maintaining and developing their congregations.⁴⁸ He calls for a church that is trained and values ethics, spirituality, and morals.

Du Bois's idea of the African American pastor is someone that is trained to lead during crucial times. Much has changed and these changes include the transition from the Negro Church to the Black Church; this was to suggest the quick growth of the new black middle class. Scholars of the Black participation have observed pastors leading as essential in Black history because of distinct ruling role of the black church in black communities.

"All too often when the black community seeks leadership that is needed in crisis, its quest for transformative leadership is focused on male ministers."⁴⁹ Du Bois's rendition of the Negro preacher in the Negro Church is mainly male, and this was to be expected based on the fact that one hundred years ago women in ministry were unheard of. This does not mean that he wasn't aware of the importance of black women who, based on race, gender, and class contributed to the freedom of all women and thus the realization of American democracy. "In *The Gift of Black Folk*, he devotes an entire chapter to analyzing the key influences of black women, many of whom were poor and

48 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 4.

49 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 5.

uneducated but who rose out of the black mass of slaves not only to guide their own folk but to influence the nation.”⁵⁰ As we’ve moved into the 21st century women have become an integral part of ministry.

“God Did It: is the story of a male pastor in the transforming of a traditional church, high and lifted up above street corner sights and sounds at the gateway to the black middle-class community of Middleton are carefully spaced posters on all sides of a yet undeveloped 275 foot by 245 foot corner property.”⁵¹ “The words proclaimed by these posters, “God Did It, are obviously intended to invite religious reflection by the thousands who daily pass by this commercial intersection adjacent to an expressway.”⁵²

“This property acquisition is the site of Christopher Temple CME Churches yet unrealized dream of commercial development, affordable apartment rental, and a senior citizen high rise.”⁵³ “In the social context of Christopher Temple’s black middle-class community, community economic development and other efforts to make the black community a better place to live may be interpreted as an evangelistic sign, a holistic way of building a new community ordered by principles of love and justice.”⁵⁴ It became clear to this pastor Rev. Walter Harrison that the church has an obligation to do community developing in the surrounding community.

Tribble tells the story of the fifteen years that Rev. Harrison has pastored this church there have been many changes. This initially was met with great opposition.

50 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 5.

51 Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*:

52 *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 23.

53 Tribble, Sr., 23. *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 23.

54 Tribble, Sr., 23. *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 23.

However, once the members saw the need for transformation it was received. As a result Christopher Temple now has three regular worship experiences, where in the past it was the one 10:45 worship. One of these services is a Saturday “come as you are” service and the homeless are bused in for worship, food and clothing. “The Sunday worship services with all the instruments going, Hammond organ, two electric pianos, lead guitar, bass guitar, and full drum set do not look like a customary Methodist worship service; demonstrative praise and worship is the emphasis throughout.”⁵⁵ The membership has increased tremendously. Rev. Harrison came to the church in 1986 and there were 1,200 members on role and about 400 were active. After the transformation there are now 3,000 members with about 2,000 active. It simply takes dedicated leadership and a people with *a mind to work*.

Dan Southerland talks of the importance of preparing as you lead your church through change. He gives the following eight steps. **1. Preparing for Vision, 2. Defining the Vision, 3. Planting the Vision, 4. Sharing the Vision, 5. Implementing the Vision, 6. Dealing with opposition, 7. Making Course Corrections and 8. Evaluating the Results.**

With that said. God is doing something new in the world today. “The largest churches in the history of Christianity are being built, including multiple churches in South America and Korea that have more than 1000,000 people in regular attendance.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Tribble Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership In The Black Church*: 25.

⁵⁶ Dan Southerland, *Transitioning Leading Your Church Through Change*: (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan 1999), 14.

According to Open Doors “International, 10,000 people a day are coming to faith in South America and 30,000 a day in Africa.”⁵⁷

We are literally looking at a second reformation. In the 1500 and 1600s the reformation was about the message, dealing with what the bible says about sin, and salvation, and how we relate to God. The second reformation that we now face is dealing with methods. It deals with how we should relate to the people around us and how we make the gospel relevant to the times in which we live. “If we are successful at this men and women, boys and girls from everywhere will come to know, love, and accept Jesus Christ as their savior. In the second reformation, the ministry of the church is being given back to the people.”⁵⁸

Because there do not now exist any suitable nonsexist pronoun substitutes for she, he or him, there is more frequent use of the masculine pronoun than the collaborators desire. “Both writers are assiduous proponents of the demise of sex role stereotyping and ask that the reader regard the masculine pronoun, except where there is a specific male antecedent, as strictly generic, inclusive of fe(male) personhood, but with the real knowledge that the black Baptist minister has been and still is generally male.”⁵⁹

Finally, while traditionally the church has been pastored by men, it is becoming more and more common for women to be called as pastors. It is still one of the most controversial subjects in the AARC but many are breaking away from tradition with the belief that God is sovereign and can use whoever he chooses.

57 Southerland, *Transitioning Your Church Through Change*: 14.

58 Southerland, *Transitioning Your Church Through Change*: 15.

59 Massey, McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*: 68

CHAPTER FOUR-PROJECT DESIGN

This project is designed to provide assistance to pastors/leaders in the African American Rural Church (AARC), especially in the Missionary Baptist Church, who are in the process of transition but experiencing challenges. “The goal is to produce a booklet for these pastors, leaders, and churches so that transition/change will be smooth as opposed to presenting so many challenges.”¹ Because of this, as chapters 1, 2, and 3 have demonstrated, the first purpose of this project exhibits the problems the AARC is having today as it relates to change, when it comes to the need for more structure in various areas of leadership. Finally, the position of the AARC and churches in general need to be placed in a particular contemporary area. The outcome of this project will determine key content of this projected booklet.

To accomplish this, personal interviews were conducted with local pastors/leaders, and church members related to change, transition, and structure. There were a total of thirty-six people interviewed from six churches. They consisted of six pastors, two deacons from each church, and three lay people from each church. I also interviewed my pastor, Bishop John A. McCullough II and members of the Friendship Christian Church where I am presently a member and serve as one of the directors of our “Timothy Leaders Ministry.” These interviews took place over the course of the past two years with the first taking place in early 2014 and concluding in the later part of 2017. Four of the six churches have successfully transitioned while the other two are in the process. However, the findings of the interviews were basically the same. Each pastor emphasized the importance of training leaders. All of the six pastors had one thing in

¹ A draft of this booklet is found in the Appendix

common and that is that they all came to highly traditional Baptist churches, and they basically all experienced the same issues in seeking to help these churches adopt more flexible and responsive structures. Those that have already transitioned along with those that are in the process faced opposition due to a lack of full understanding as to the goal in transitioning to doing things differently. Each pastor concluded that the primary reason for this opposition was a lack of training among their leaders, congregations. Those pastors that have completed the transition advised that after training leaders it was not as difficult sharing the vision with laity. These pastors also shared in common the lack of one hundred percent participation in support for changes which all agreed is rare in any church if at all. The interviews with laity revealed that resistance was also due to a lack of understanding why we do what we do. All laity interviewed in one way or the other wanted to know why there was a need for change, since they had done it the same way for so long. I found in these interviews that generally people get accustomed to certain things and it's hard to get them to see things differently. However, the interviews that were conducted with the same pastors, deacons and laity after completing the transition revealed that with the proper training and leadership development the transitions were successful. Those pastors still in the process agree that leadership development is the key.

This was followed by a review of material as it relates to churches and leadership involved in transition. After discussing several topics during the interviews I had to address several other areas of the AARC, Baptist churches and the church overall. These issues related to the image of the AARC and also of the pastor/leadership. As a result, in

the biblical/theological and historical review of this study became paramount to address the matters at hand. The next step is to build the booklet.

FORMAT AND STYLE

This booklet is designed for pastors, deacons, trustees, chairs of committees, and the entire church membership. As a result the information will be presented so that it will assist to all of those listed above.

The idea for the booklet will be similar to material familiar to the AARC/baptist churches. That material will come from *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*,² *Church Administration Handbook*,³ *Visionary Leadership*,⁴ *Transformational Leadership A New Model For Total Church Involvement*.⁵ These references cover a wide range of things: anything from how to have a basic church service, election of officers, finances, how to keep the church books, budgeting, etc.

Since this information is already being used within the AARC/Baptist churches, they are an ideal target for this project. The booklet for this project will be approximately 50-60 pages long, in booklet form. Some chapters will consist of a question and answer section. The number of chapters will depend upon the content of each chapter. However, it will be limited to 5 chapters.

A narrative style will be used in writing this booklet. The topics discussed will be biblically based and theologically sound, however I do anticipate covering as many issues

2 Everett C. Goodwin. *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*: (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 1995.

3 Bruce, P. Powers. *Church Administration Handbook*: (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman), 1997.

4 Burt Nanus. *Visionary Leadership*: (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 1992.

5 Phillip, V. *Transformational Leadership: A New Model For Total Church Involvement*. (Nashville, TN Broadman & Holman), 1996.

as possible and my approach will be as casual as possible. This I hope will make reading as well as application easy.

CONTENT

This project has uncovered some interesting points that need to be brought to the attention of the AARC. That should include pastors, administrators, deacons, trustees, chairs of committees, and at some point to the entire congregation. This information is crucial for all of the above if transition is to be successful in their ministry.

There are a few areas of concern and even fear that surfaced during this project. I must admit I was not surprised because of my past experiences. In every interview I conducted, these areas were mentioned by all those interviewed. They are the fear of losing their denominational standing, the desire to do things the way they've been done for years, and the fear of becoming too large (in number.) These perceptions derive from the fact that those consulted feel that transition would cause the little white homey church that sits on the corner to become too large, and they fear losing control of the church. Most of those I spoke with feel that changes aren't necessary to get to heaven. After learning that a number of those agreed with that *myth*, I realized there is a lack of knowledge and understanding as it relates to the idea of change/transition, and this is nothing new. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."⁶ It appears that many fear that transition will lead to a loss of identity. It has become no secret that there is a broad range of misconceptions as it relates to the idea of change/transition.

These views are widespread within the AARC. These views have and will continue to have unfavorable results in the process of transition. As long as the majority refuse to open up for at least an explanation and get the proper understanding of what

⁶ Hos. 4:6 (NKJV).

change means it will never be successful. There is too much co dependency within the AARC. Congregants must be in prayer for themselves and act and speak as the Lord gives them utterance.

“Our church is just fine like it is.”⁷ This is the mentality of most of those I spoke with. However, this project will show primarily the benefits transition would have if done correctly and with full cooperation. Cooperation and understanding are two key words to the smooth transition and in that order; because one may not always understand but full cooperation will help smooth transition. The people may not always fully understand the vision but must connect with it. I’m of the opinion that God doesn’t always provide laity with the information that he provides the leader with.

Many AARCs have the mentality that this type of transition is for larger churches. However, the truth of the matter is that church health is not contingent on size but rather on the ability to follow the leader that God puts in place. “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”⁸ This is the problem with many churches large or small. They equate success with size, quite to the contrary. Large numbers have never been a priority to God. And the Lord said to Gideon, “The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands...”⁹ “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”¹⁰ “...If God be for us, who can be against us?”¹¹ So it is evident it

⁷Quoted from an interview with a lay person conducted on January 26, 2016.

⁸ Jer. 3:15 (NKJV).

⁹ Judg 7:2 (NKJV).

¹⁰ Matt 18:20 (NKJV).

¹¹ Rom 8:31 (NKJV).

only takes a few committed individuals who trust God as well as the leader to complete God's mission. It is all found in the Lord's Prayer: *Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

The content of this project is designed primarily but not limited to assist AARCs who wish to transition to a more contemporary approach to ministry in the 21st century. The manual I am proposing will assist pastors and leaders as they attempt to establish consistent order and stability while doing ministry. It will consist of policies and procedures that will lighten the load on the pastor. Scripture supports the fact that the pastor needs assistance in ministry and he/she can't do it alone. But Moses' father-in-law said to him,

This isn't the right way to do this. It is too much work for you to do alone. You cannot do this job by yourself. It wears you out. And it makes the people tired too. Now, listen to me. Let me give you some advice. And I pray God will be with you. You should continue listening to the problems of the people. And you should continue to speak to God about these things. You should explain God's laws and teachings to the people. Warn them not to break the laws. Tell them the right way to live and what they should do. But you should also choose some of the people to be judges and leaders. Choose good men you can trust men who respect God. Choose men who will not change their decisions for money. Make these men rulers over the people. There should be rulers over 1000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and even over ten people. Let these rulers judge the people. If there is a very important case, then they can come to you and let you decide what to do. But they can decide the other cases themselves. In this way these men will share your work with you, and it will be easier for you to lead the people.¹²

More and more people were becoming followers of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking followers began to complain against the other Jewish followers. They said that their widows were not getting their share of what the followers received every day. "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the

¹² Ex 18:17-22 (ERV).

disciples and said, it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;”¹³

This manual is also being designed to assist laity in understanding and accepting the orders that God has set aside. There is so much that is being practiced in not only the AARC, but churches in general, that is not biblical. Hopefully this will make pastors, leaders, and laity take a look at the owner's manual (The Bible) and follow those instructions. This will be beneficial to churches seeking pastors as well. Jesus trained the twelve, laid hands them, and sent them out for the work of ministry. “Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. In addition sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.”¹⁴ I am prayerful that this manual which is the purpose of this project will follow the outline presented below.

OUTLINE

In the introduction I will begin by admitting the problems that come with leading a small AARC, problems that are shared by leaders and pastors of churches in general, but especially in the AARC. One of the problems is accepting change. The main objective of this section will be to enlighten and assure readers that this is in no way an attempt to dissolve the AARC’s legacy but to strengthen what already exists. I also intend to provide information to support the fact that the AARC can be healthy and not lose its identity during transition, while showing what I believe a healthy church looks like, and that will consist of establishing structure and providing policies and procedures that will

¹³ Acts 6:1-3 (NKJV).

¹⁴ Lk. 9:1-2 (NKJV).

allow ministry to run smoothly. I will also define smooth transition: As you work through the process of transition, you will identify many changes that need to be made. No one but God can give you the strategic order for your transitions. This will move into deliberation of transition in the AARC.

The body of the manual will be divided into three parts. In Part One, The function of the Local Church. Chapter One will investigate the historical and biblical context of the role of the pastor, and the fact that the work can't be done alone, and will place the AARC right in the center of what God has been doing in and through small rural churches if you will, from the beginning of church history until now. More emphasis will be placed on some classic, damaging attitudes that congregants may have about the AARC and reveal that many AARCs have in past times been fruitful as they attempted to transition from the old to the new, and as a result it has given God the glory which is why we do what we do. In Chapter Two, the role of the congregants will be discussed, and the receiving of the pastor's heart and spirit. The concept of the pastor being the shepherd, and laity being the flock will be discussed. By no means do I intend to insult anyone's intelligence, however, by nature sheep are blind and need to be led. Through this dialogue, I will maintain that the pastor is the visionary and should be free to spend ample time waiting upon God so that he or she may bring a meaningful word to the congregation. This chapter along with the introduction will set the foundation for everything that follows. I believe with all my heart that this will help the AARC including the pastor, leaders and laity develops a new outlook on the church and its need to transition to more contemporary ways that will in turn provide structure that doesn't currently exist, resulting in greater stability and fruitfulness.

In Part Two, “Developing Structure within the Local Church, I will present policies and procedures that I believe are necessary to help the function of the local church. I will also suggest a team referred to as Timothy Leaders that I presently supervise in the local church that I’m presently a member of. Friendship Christian Church Gastonia North Carolina Bishop John A. McCullough , Senior Pastor.

I will also address Visitation: visiting members at home, how to visit the bereaved, and how to visit the sick in the hospital. This will also educate someone other than the pastor on visitation protocol. Chapter Three will present specifically the responsibility of “The Pastoral Care Team” and its primary objective. This chapter will also include forms that are to be used by “the pastoral Care Team” as well as congregants. It sort of sets the pace, relieves, the pastor and allows he or she to spend more time preparing relevant messages for the people of God.

At the end of each chapter there will be an area for questions, answers and reflection. My prayer is that those using this manual would gather and discuss the contents to gather understanding before moving into action. I trust that any questions that should arise from this type of roundtable discussion have been addressed in this project. My suggestion to pastors and leaders is that they fast and pray carefully until released by God to share this process with the congregation as, I suggest in the manual.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Once a draft of the manual is completed, the project will move forward to evaluation of the completed draft. I will send evaluations to those that were interviewed throughout this project, which included pastors, leaders, and church members. I will also ask an additional 20 people to review this manual and critique its contents, making suggestions for improvement as well as suggested additions and deletions. Those who receive this manual and agree to use it I will ask to evaluate in the areas of content, style, length, and format.

I will also make myself available, by phone, email, text, and even in person for those that have questions about the manual or need detailed explanation of all or part of the manual. From the beginning of this project the objective has been to develop something that would be helpful in assisting those leading transition in their ministry. I pray that this manual does just that. To the degree that the discussions that have come from this work, especially among those within the AARC who had no idea of how to accomplish this type of transition, have facilitated positive Transformation has truly been a blessing. To my surprise as I have discussed this work with complete strangers in ministry, they have taken an interest in a copy of the completed manual. Some have even inquired about being one who takes part in evaluating the manual. My prayer is that this project will prove to be a blessing to not only the AARC, but to any pastor who is led by God to transition their church.

CHAPTER FIVE-OUTCOMES

The draft of the guide book for this project can be found in the appendix. As I stated in chapter four, the guidebook was forwarded to those interviewed as well as an additional twenty people throughout the African American Rural Church who have either successfully transitioned their churches, are in the process of transition, contemplating transition, or those seeking assistance on how to transition. These people were asked to review this guidebook with a fine tooth comb in the following areas: length, content, style, format, and any suggestions for improvement including any suggested additions or deletions.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE GUIDEBOOK DRAFT

The response I received to the draft of the guidebook has been overwhelmingly positive. In addition to the thirty-six initially interviewed I contacted another twenty people who were considering transition, had already experienced transition, and agreed to review the guidebook. These twenty included my past deacons, some of our members. These interviews were conducted in the later part of 2017. All of the fifty-six contacted all agreed that some part of this guidebook if not all would assist them in their process. Of the fifty-six who participated, fifteen were pastors, fifteen deacons, and twenty-six were laity.

One assessment of the project seemed to express the sentiments of everyone who evaluated the guidebook. “I read the book from the beginning to the end and found it very reader/user friendly, and very on time for not only the AARC but any church needing assistance transforming their church.”¹ A lay person who went through a successful but

¹ Campbell, Kevin. 2014. Interview by author. Hisperia. January 8.

difficult transition had this to say: “It would be a lot smoother, and less stressful had we had this guide book when we went through the changes in our church.”²

While I am grateful for the positive reviews of the guide book I don’t want to mislead the reader of this project. Those whom I requested critique this project did just that and were very candid and honest with their suggestions on how to improve the guidebook prior to its completion. I will give the most helpful critiques using the areas that I asked each person to comment on, along with my comments and reflections as well.

Length

Most found the length of the book to be acceptable. Initially I didn’t know if a long guidebook would bore the reader, and then I wondered if it was too short and would it contain enough information to accomplish the mission. I found it rather interesting that a few advised that I lengthen the guidebook with information from some of the experiences that they had during their period of transition. His concern seemed to be with the lack of respect for the pastor within the AARC. Overall it appears that all those interviewed were comfortable with the length of the guidebook. I personally am satisfied as well. I don’t believe it should have been any longer. It was just enough to read, digest, and put into action. However, it may be that after using it in the process there could be more learned that could improve the contents and lengthen the book. For instance I might address new topics or even lengthen the topics already addressed. This would primarily depend on suggestions from those using the manual.

² Coffey, William. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. January 17.

Content

In the area of content, the majority, if not all, of those interviewed were impressed with the content of the book. As mentioned earlier, there were a few who had suggestions based on their experiences, but did not deem it necessary for me to make any revisions to the content. Most agreed, especially pastors, that the most important component would be training the leaders on the content, and then along with the pastor impressing the ideas upon the congregation. One deacon stated, “this would fall in the area of ‘catching the pastor’s vision’ that is mentioned in the guidebook.”³ There were quite a few respondents who were impressed with and excited about the personal experiences I shared. One Trustee interviewed said, “the personal experiences you shared is evident that you’ve been right in the middle of things and you know what works and what doesn’t.”⁴

Pastors seemed to enjoy the guidebook as it referenced the role of officers within the church, catching the vision of the pastor, and the need for more structure as it relates to policies and procedures. One pastor said, “We must have better structure especially in the area of finances because the IRS is cracking down, and furthermore we must be better stewards.”⁵ I must admit that I am excited because from the responses I received, it is clear I accomplished what I was trying to accomplish. The most frequent words used by the interviewees were useful, feasible, and reader friendly. As I followed -up with a few of the respondents, one pastor, two of his deacons, and three members of his church, all

3 Jefferson, James. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. April 17.

4 Jackson, Allen. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. April 17.

5 Rogers, Gabriel. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. April 17.

advised that they would use the guidebook and believed it would be very helpful in the continued transition of their church. One respondent who teaches the new members class at her church said, “I’m going to talk to pastor and suggest that this guidebook be required of all new members going forward, and a book studied by all present members.”⁶

There was one very interesting response about the content of the book that I received from a layperson, in particular concerning the use of material from Toler and Nelson, *The Five Star Church, Serving God and His People With Excellence*. This person who has basically been in the church all her life and really loves the Lord said she found the guidebook was overall based on the Bible and to a degree consistent with the AARC tradition with one exception. She wrote,

I believe the guidebook will be beneficial to churches in transition, however I’m not sure that the information used from the “*Five Star Church*” will be of any help. I just don’t agree with God’s house being run like a business. That’s the problem in our churches it is being run too worldly.⁷

While I do respect this response and did consider its merit, the response above does not convey the point that Toler and Nelson or I were trying to make, and this point was one of the more important points that I wanted those using the guidebook to understand. The reader evidently misunderstood my point, or I didn’t explain my use of the information clearly. Toler and Nelson used the illustration of businesses to show the importance of excellence in church just as a business promotes excellence. It was not to suggest that we use worldly methods, but that we use a spirit of excellence. I am not too sure how the

⁶ Eison, Frankie. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. July 12.

⁷ Ingram, Annie. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. July 12.

reader reached that particular conclusion, but I believe and still suggest that the church is a business to a degree and at times must be run like one.

“One pastor said: “You should have included more information on the role of the pastor and deacons, and their relationships because in my church my deacons don’t seem to know their place or responsibilities.”⁸ While I did address this topic minimally, I wanted to make the guidebook manageable, not to make a separate section on this topic but to merely include suggestions and comments about the benefits of exercising the proper relationship between the pastor and deacons as it relates to scripture. Keeping in mind that this relationship is important whether transitioning a church or not. The scripture that I think defines the role of the pastor and deacons is found in Acts 6:1-4:

And in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this.⁹

While this scripture doesn’t mention the word pastor or deacons it is the guide that has been used over the years not only by the AARC but churches of other denominations to illustrate the fact that the pastor needed some assistance, and that was when the first seven deacons were chosen. So if these seven men (deacons) would take care of the widows then the (pastors) could spend more time in the Word. These seven men according to scripture were, Stephen, Phillip, and Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas.

There is a lot more that can be discussed about the above topic. While I agree with the pastor’s assessment, I also understand the importance of teaching people so that

⁸ Feely, Darryl. 2014. Interview by author. Charlotte. July 23.

⁹ Acts 6:1-3

they understand what they're being taught. Sometimes it comes down to mere interpretation of scripture; other times it boils down to a person who just doesn't want to be led. I believe that a pastor won't be able to pastor every member of his/her congregation. Everybody doesn't want a pastor or to be pastored. Some people just want a preacher and to be preached to. In other words, they don't want to be held accountable. This I believe is not just limited to the AARC but churches of all denominations and races. However, there is a scripture that supports my belief: "And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."¹⁰ So I believe that this supports the fact that it wasn't that Jesus couldn't help those who rejected; it was the fact that they didn't receive him. Thus, if you don't receive, and respect a pastor as your pastor, he/she will not benefit you.

Style

There wasn't a lot of response to the style of writing in the guidebook. The overall consensus seemed to be the same: that it was a soft approach. One lay person advised that "your approach was more suggestive and not persuasive, which will assist people in using the guidebook in transitioning their churches."¹¹ I didn't use an approach giving demands and ultimatums because in my experience people tend to be more resentful when given ultimatums or seemingly being made to do something. This person agreed with this type of approach because they had previously worked with a more demanding person and it made them feel as if their opinions had no merit.

¹⁰ Lk. 4:24 (KJV)

¹¹ Houser, Joe. 2014. Interview by author. Greensboro. July 31.

One pastor advised “in some areas of the guidebook you appeared to be preaching rather than just talking, you need to be careful as this can turn a reader off.”¹² This pastor did not identify any particular area of the book, and as I proofread the material I didn’t notice any area where this was the case. I asked a few others that read the guidebook for their opinion on this pastor’s comments and none of them seemed to agree. As a result I thank this pastor for his comments however I decided not to change any area of the guidebook.

Format

There weren’t very many observations regarding the format. All those responding felt that the format was easy flowing. One pastor suggested that crucial information in the text could be written in bold or somehow divided from the main text as an insert section on the page, so that “he could go back and find the information during meetings where transitions was being discussed.”¹³ One deacon was very appreciative of the wording. He advised that “the wording was real easy to digest not a whole lot of big words I don’t understand.”¹⁴ While I agree with the comments above I decided not to address these features at this time.

Suggestions for Improvement

Most of those responding on the classification above, more often that had suggestions for improvement as it related to length, content, style and format. A few did use this area to encourage me, or thank me for being led to organize such a guidebook to help churches especially African American Rural Churches in this important area of

12 Houze, Bobby. 2014 Interview by author. Charlotte. August 10.

13 Whitlock, Benjamin. 2014 Interview by author. High Point. August 12.

14 Willis, Robert. 2014 Interview by author. Charlotte. August 16.

church in the twenty first century. Most of those who reviewed and responded to the information were either actively transitioning their churches or had done so and found the guidebook would have been helpful.

Some of the general comments were in reference to the distribution of the final project. One suggested “that it be sent to all local associations and be made required reading for all churches so that everybody would be on the same page.”¹⁵ Another suggested that the guidebook be made available on the Missionary Baptist website. Another suggested the final guidebook be required in new member’s class in their church. All of these suggestions voice my sentiments for the final guidebook.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are a few areas that will require further study. The first is in reference to pastors and their salaries. As previously stated, some AARCs are not financially able to support their pastor on a full- time basis. This is where pastoring part- time and full- time comes from. However as I mentioned earlier there is no such thing as a part-time pastor, any more than there is a thing as a part-time shepherd or a part-time parent. If you define full- time and part- time by the amount the pastor is paid, then maybe so. However, I submit there is no such thing as a part time pastor. In most churches the pastor is expected to be available beyond office hours, and in addition sermon preparation is very time consuming. And then there’s visitation, weddings, funerals, house blessings, baby blessings, counseling sessions, and the list goes on.

In my experience, pastoring AARCs, even when the salary is minimal the people still expect all of the above and more. I have often heard the question raised and debated in AARCs about whether or not the preacher/pastor should preach for money. My answer

15 Montgomery, Josh. 2014. Interview by author. Kannapolis. August 3.

to that question has been and will continue to be that pastors are not paid for preaching per se. There are other things to consider such as: time, value of experience, leadership skills, and overall qualifications, and the list goes on just as long as the list of expectations go on. This has been a debate that has gone on for years and years in the AARC, again largely because of a lack of training and understanding. Pastoring is a profession Therefore, my question to those who oppose large salaries and in some cases salaries period; How would you feel working for nothing? I don't believe there are many, if any at all, who would work for no pay. "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."¹⁶

Another area that needs to be addressed further is the distinctive characters of the responsibilities of both offices in the church as well as other ministry leaders. The Missionary Baptist denomination interprets scripture as teaching that there are only two officers in the church. "Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are set at Philippi with the bishops and deacons."¹⁷ "The officers in a local New Testament church are pastors and deacons (Phil. 1:1). The same office is variously called bishop, elder, or pastor."¹⁸ Baptist polity over the years has declared two officers according to scripture in a New Testament church, pastor and deacon. Baptist believe the Bible teaches that all Christians are called to service and be servants to others in Jesus name, but others are called and anointed by God and ordained to function in specific capacities such as pastor and deacons.

16 I Tim. 5:18 (ESV)

17 Phil. 1:1 (KJV)

18 Herschel H. Hobbs *The Baptist Faith and Message*. p. 69

Baptist declares the office of pastor is one of two that church following New Testament principles should have. The Bible uses three words for the same office: bishop, pastor, and elder. In the Greek language of the New Testament these three words represent tasks and not different persons or offices:

The elders which are among you I exhort who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.¹⁹

Baptists also use the Bible for qualifications of persons to serve as pastor:

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.²⁰

While these are qualifications set for the pastor, I believe they are characteristics that all Christians should possess. There is one qualification that has brought about controversy over the years, and that is the requirement of being the husband of one wife. I won't go into great detail about this. That would be another project. However, I would like to mention that I believe God can and will forgive us if we ask, so if a person has been divorced, that should not prohibit them from serving as pastor or in ministry in any and all circumstances. "The pastor is the spiritual and administrative head of the church. As

19 I Pet. 5:1-5 (NKJV)

20 I Tim. 3:1-7 (KJV)

spiritual leader the pastor is to teach and preach the Gospel and provide leadership in developing the new various ministries necessary, as God directs him.”²¹

Another area that needs further attention is the selection process of a pastor. Personally, I’ve been before many search committees, and been asked countless questions. Many of those questions are deeply private and personal, questions that those asking wouldn’t answer themselves. I know they wouldn’t because I’ve tried asking them. In many cases people want to hold pastors to higher standards than they hold themselves. While I believe under certain circumstances pastors are held to higher standards, they shouldn’t be put on pedestals because they are human. There was and is but one perfect and that is Jesus himself.

As I mentioned earlier each AARC is autonomous and calls the person they vote in as pastor. The process may differ from church to church but basically it goes as follows:

1. When the church is without a pastor the congregation appoints a search committee to prayerfully evaluate the qualifications of those persons who have applied via resume.
2. After careful deliberation, the committee recommends to the church two or three selected to come preach, teach Sunday school, and Bible Study. After this two of the three are then voted on by the church.
3. In most cases a pastor serves in a church as long as both pastor and congregation are comfortable with the relationship. However, in some AARCs the pastor is voted on annually.

²¹ Dr. John H. Walker, *A Fresh Look At The New Testament Deacon*: (Lithonia, GA Orman Press, 2001,) 16.

Needless to say, I have concerns with this entire process. First, as I mentioned committees ask questions that they wouldn't want asked of themselves and most importantly this is not biblical. Jesus taught the disciples, laid hands on them, and sent them out for service. As I mentioned earlier, I believe when possible, a sitting pastor should select and prepare his successor before retiring or moving on. Since we're not privy to our time of transition, I suggest a pastor should have someone in place as agreed upon by his board to step in the event of his untimely death. Certainly this can't be done if the two separate on rocky terms. Secondly, if the process that's being used continues, I don't agree with a committee taking two persons before the church because it causes division among the people. I am an advocate of only taking one candidate to the church from the beginning of the process so as not to confuse people. Also, in many cases, this process can go on for years, and I believe a congregation should be without a pastor for as short of time as possible. Some AARCs will select an interim and listen to preachers over a long period of time, and in many cases people leave the church because of a lack of stability. Then, when a pastor is selected, they expect the new pastor to make the church live when the use of the above process killed it.

Another experience I've had is the committee with the approval of the church will select an interim pastor, and all sides agree that the interim will not be considered for the position of permanent pastor in the process. After a period of time, the interim grows on the people, and then the interim wants to be considered. This is not fair to the other candidates who've been before the congregation once or twice, while the interim has been there in some cases for six months or more. This is all the more reason for the section in the guidebook for policies and procedures.

The above process in many cases will have to be used if a pastor is not able to name a successor for one reason or the other. In any case the agreement between the interim pastor and the committee should be put in writing and presented as an official document to the church. I say this because I was involved in a situation where this was the agreement between the committee and the interim, and the interim took his position and manipulated the situation so that if he had not been added to the list of candidates, it would have split the church. I suffice to say I had more problems with the interim not keeping his word than I did with the committee or the church.

The second and final office that the AARC church recognizes is that of the deacon. Pastors are selected by the congregation, and deacons are selected by the pastor and presented to the church as deacons in training. This is in accordance with the scripture,

Likewise must the deacons be grave not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless, even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which I in Christ Jesus.²²

The role of a deacon varies from church to church. In many churches, deacons are asked to evaluate and recommend serious matters that need to be brought before the church for a vote. However, Doctor John Walker gives a deeper definition of the deacon and their responsibilities in his book *The New Testament deacon*. He says: “The term diakonos (deacon) denotes service, ministration, helper or bondservant, one who has sold himself by choice, for service. His ministry is non-preaching.”²³ Deacons are needed just as much today as they were needed in the New Testament church. That is, if they accept

²² 1 Tim. 3:8-13 (KJV)

²³ Walker, *A Fresh Look At The New Testament Deacon*: 19.

the responsibilities they were chosen for, and that is to serve. This means to assist the pastor. “Deacons should remember that God has chosen them to lead His church through the pastoral office. Therefore, deacons must understand that their role is not one of ruling the pastor, but seeking to hear God’s spirit speaking to them when the pastor attempts to lead.”²⁴ There have been many instances where churches were divided and even torn apart when deacons exercised authority that wasn’t theirs. One problem is that when a pulpit is vacant (in other words when a church is without a pastor), the deacons are in charge as it relates to supplying the pulpit until another pastor is chosen, and that is a part of their responsibility in the absence of a pastor. However, the experiences I’ve had is that deacons tend not to want to relinquish that authority once a pastor is chosen. There is only one head. There is an old saying: “anything with two heads is a monster.” Thus, there can only be one leader, and that is the pastor.

Finally, there are other committees/boards that are already in place such as the trustee ministry, usher’s ministry, the shepherd’s care ministry (also known as the Pastor’s Aide), the men’s ministry, women’s ministry, singles ministry, couples ministry and etc. These ministries function as individual ministries within the church and elect presidents/chairpersons and other officers, but are under the leadership of the pastor and board.

Years ago when I was in seminary in the Masters of Divinity program I never would have imagined the things I address in this project. From what we were taught one would have thought that every church was a perfect church especially the Missionary Baptist Church. I say this because where I attended Shaw University Divinity School is a Baptist school. I was advised to do my masters work at a school of the denomination

24 Walker, *A Fresh Look At The New Testament Deacon*:21.

where I would seek to pastor, and after that if I were to pursue further education denomination wouldn't be as important. All that advice is fine however, we weren't taught to expect a lot of the things I address in this project and that is because my stance all along has been that many things don't make it to rural areas.

Finally, I contend that the information that will follow in the appendix will help change this unfortunate circumstance. The AARC can definitely benefit from this information if pastors would simply apply the information. I'm not suggesting that all that they do is incorrect, much of it isn't biblical, and it's just the way things are done in part because the people don't know any better. This is why I suggest that training those in leadership using the booklet I'm submitting which is biblically based will improve the function of the AARC.

APPENDIX

Change is difficult in anything and is in no way easy. However, it seems to be especially difficult in the church, and even more difficult in the AARC. There is much work to be done and as times change, I believe people need to change. In my experience in the AARC people are very reluctant to change because they are afraid of losing their church which doesn't belong to them anyway. The Bible is very clear on the ownership of the church:

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I am? So they said, Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.²⁵

I emphasize this because some people in the AARC take ownership of the church because of the money they pay, their roots, and their longevity. However, what most people don't understand is that change doesn't consist of losing anything but in successful transitions there is a very strong possibility of growth. It's almost like an old saying used when a parent is in fear of losing a son or daughter to marriage. The saying is: you're not losing a son but gaining a daughter. This is very much the same with the church. New methods and diversity are imperative to transition.

One of the changes that have taken place in the AARC is a strategic shift from traditional worship service to a much more celebrative worship. Many traditional AARC's are not accustomed to someone shouting or getting up to praise the Lord, and if one does they receive unwelcomed stares from others in the congregation. However, it has been noted that churches accepting this type of strategic shift are growing rapidly.

²⁵ Matt. 16:13-18 (NKJV)

“Wise observers of black religion noted that black Holiness and Pentecostal bodies, such as the 3.5 million Church of God In Christ, were growing in the black community whereas the historic black denominations were losing their young people to these churches.”²⁶ Presiding Elder Crider from The CME church had this to say,

I think it's a lack of understanding what growth is all about. I think it's too much holding on to tradition. By tradition, I mean, “We've always done it this way.” We've always had, “Holy, Holy” for the procession or something. We've always had, [hymns like] “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross” and “Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior.” We didn't allow any praise service or testimonial before the worship service started. If I clapped in the church and raised my hand [People would say] “that's not Methodist.” That really has stunted the growth of our church. We're losing our young folks because they cannot let go. They're going to these congregations where they can rock, where they can holy dance, where they can clap. They can speak in tongues. They can go there and do all of these things. I really think what happened is, as Methodist, we got carried away with people bragging about us: “ya'll those educated folks.” It went to our head and they [the Holiness and Pentecostal churches] were steady out there preaching and praying about the love of Jesus and we were teaching them about all of these theologians.²⁷

Many AARC's just don't want structure. Some AARC's are reluctant to have bylaws. Many of them who do are attempting to comply with the law which is sometimes required depending on the state in which they reside. Some churches say that they are led by the Bible [the New Testament] and that's enough. “Whenever black people in church become legalistic, depending solely on constitutions, bylaws, Hiscox's *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, *Robert's Rules of Order*, discipline, that institution, according to Elliot Mason is in serious trouble.”²⁸ “Power becomes the agenda rather than the welfare of the church. Black people are basically a consensus ad-hoc oriented

26 Jeffery L. Tribble, Sr. *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in The Black Church*, New York, NY: (Palgrave Macmillan 2005,), 92

27 Tribble, Sr. *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church*. 92-93.

28 Massey, Floyd, McKinney, Samuel Berry *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*, (Valley Forge, Judson Press 1976.) 67.

group.”²⁹ This statement is true to an extent, but when there is no presence of the Holy Spirit and there are no fair rules of structure then usually transition will meet its demise.

In this day and time it is imperative that the AARC regardless of previous reluctance or unwillingness, deal with the importance of church bylaws, articles or constitution whatever the preference. This must serve as a conveyance in the success and protection against internal as well as external intrusion on its rights. Anyone of the above must be legally and technically established, however it must be in line with that which is legal and must communicate its legality keeping in line with the guidelines of Christianity and the spirit of God as defined in the Word of God by Jesus Christ. In today’s world, churches should be regulated by bylaws that are periodically reviewed, and that is so they will not be forgotten and not just used when it’s beneficial to one party or the other.

To support my stance on structure and the importance of a constitution. There was a pastor in Houston Texas by the name of Dr. Franklin Delano Sampson who pastored Friendship Missionary Baptist Church for forty-five years. Dr. Sampson was the only the fifth pastor of the church while his father served as the fourth. At some point prior to Dr. Sampson’s retirement he addressed the church during a church meeting and asked the church to amend the church constitution allowing him to appoint his successor. The constitution already advised as to what would happen should a sitting pastor die but nothing to address what would happen should a sitting pastor retire. The church amended the constitution and years later when he retired he appointed his son Reverend Franklin Delano Sampson Jr. who the church accepted and voted in unanimously, and to this date is serving the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Houston Texas with great success.

29 Massey, Floyd, 67.

This process is definitely in line with the word of God because Jesus himself prepared his disciples for ministry laid hands on them and sent them out to do ministry. “In fact Jesus said he would empower us to do greater works than he did. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father.”³⁰

Some AARC’s are living in and trying to do things from a twentieth century perspective. We are now living in the twenty first century and we must operate in that vein. I stress the importance of changing methods and not messages. It is definitely a new day. If a church follows a pastor for twenty years or more I submit that they should be able to agree with and accept a successor appointed by that pastor. I’m not suggesting an “eeny, meeny, miny, moe” process.

I’m suggesting church planning. The church along with the pastor amend the current church constitution to allow a pastor upon determining the time of retirement to allow a sitting pastor to bring in a potential successor no less than three years and no more than five years to be trained and groomed by that pastor to take the torch when he or she steps aside. Certainly I’m not suggesting that a pastor chose his best buddy, but seek God’s face as to who the successor will be and then complete the above. I mentioned bring in but this person may come from within just like corporate America, many promote from within. I don’t necessarily agree with the promoting from within because in many cases members are too familiar with someone from within and that person may not get the necessary respect needed to pastor effectively. I know situations where this has worked as well as situations where it has failed, that would be left up to each individual congregation. I would also suggest that there be provisions made in the

30 John 14:12 (NKJV)

amendment that address some unforeseen calamity that would arise and the pastor people relationship dissolve on bad terms. We need to plan for all situations.

My prayer is that this offering will prove to be a blessing to you and your congregation.

Questions for Reflections

- 1. What needs to change for successful transition?*
- 2. What should be done in preparation for a pastor's retirement?*
- 3. Who should mentor, train, and prepare a pastor's successor?*

PART ONE: FUNCTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

CHAPTER 1: THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

The African American Rural Church has been around for a long time and boast on the fact that it operates individually with no governing body. That is to say each church is autonomy. Many misuse this position and thus don't get what God has for them in and through their sent leader. The Bible is clear on why we need pastors: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,..."³¹

The pastor (preacher) is wise. Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge. The pastor is also qualified to teach the word of God. God called the pastor to teach and to preach. It is the anointing that makes the difference, and the pastor has been anointed by God to feed souls. The reason for this is, because he/she is a gift that God ordained and mainly because it's the method God has chosen to watch over His people. The pastor has a special insight that members do not have as it relates to the Word of God. The pastor is qualified to teach the word of God and is anointed to do so. God calls the pastor to teach and to preach and it is the ANOINTING THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.³²

The pastor is also anointed to feed souls. This is true because he/she is a gift that God ordained and mainly because it's the method God has chosen to watch over His

³¹ Eph. 4:11-12 (NKJV)

³² Luke 4:18-19 (NKJV)

people. The pastor also has a special insight that members do not have of the Word of God. Perception and revelation that God has given to the pastor that the local body does not have. Priest in the Old Testament were anointed to do things of God that others couldn't do.

The pastor teaches **Knowledge:**

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”³³

The pastor should teach things and thoughts “OF” God, to help us think like God thinks. It is imperative that we think and act like God if a generation is to be changed, and it starts with the leaders (pastors) in the church community. There are enough Christians in this world that together the entire world could be changed.

The pastor **Seeks Out:**

The pastor digs deep into the Word of God with a spiritual shovel to seek what's best for the people. They search the scriptures and get nuggets that will bless you beyond measure.

If done properly, it takes time to hear from God to see what should be addressed via a sermon week after week. The pastor is led by the Spirit of God and Voice of the Holy Spirit, and knows when one is hurting.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”³⁴

Some churches don't realize or respect the office of the pastor I've heard the statement “he's human just like I am, and puts his pants on one leg at a time just like I do.” That statement is very far from the truth. It's not very intelligent to notice the gift

33Jer. 3:15 (KJV)

34 Rom. 8:14 (KJV)

wrapping more than the gift that's inside. God gave man a gift and the purpose of the gift is "for the perfecting of saints" so that they're able to do the work of ministry. The gift of a pastor is to furnish, equip, the people of God in to a Holy Nation, and a Royal Priesthood.

We operate in the 5-fold ministry as described in the scriptures. "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."³⁵

Saints were not given for the perfection of ministry. Instead the five-fold ministry perfects the ministry itself. Everybody is a link everybody can't be the chain. Five-fold ministry had to come forth to bring us into completion in Christ. Pastors must be obedient to the voice of the spirit and use whatever is available to them under God:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.³⁶ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.³⁷

35 Eph. 4:8-13

36 II Tim. 4:1-4

37 II Tim. 4:5-6 (KJV)

God initiated ministry to fulfill His sovereign plan, and thus appointed the pastor to train, and to have oversight over the saints to do the work of the ministry.”³⁸

The New Testament Scripture details the most important thing for a pastor which is to feed the sheep. In Acts 6:1-5, Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 is being put into action. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are the five-fold ministry gifts Jesus gave to the church for equipping the people of God to do ministry. At this particular point and time there was no definitive job description for any of the five-fold ministry gifts. The people were frustrated and pleaded with the apostles to address the problems that were devastating them. The mass was adamant that there was nothing to come before taking care of the Hebrew and Grecian women.

If the pastor were to undertake such a large necessity the work of the Lord would go undone or at the least neglected. The pastors were to feed the people with what God impregnated them with. This impregnation came as a result of secret time spent with God in prayer, fellowship, study, and meditation upon God and His Word. This would allow the pastor to deliver a fresh word, a proceeding word, manna, which would eventually train, equip, and furnish the people of God to accomplish God’s agenda. Acts chapter six verse two the Bible says that the twelve called the “multitude of disciples” to meet with them. *Mathetes* is the Greek word for disciple which means learner or student. They were students being trained, equipped and furnished to do the work God needed done in ministry. Every local church/ministry should be filled with people who are willing to be trained , and equipped to do the work needing to be done in ministry. To many this position seems unimportant however, being trained , and equipped leads to maturity, and humbleness.

38 Dr. John A. Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: Bronx, NY: (Baruch Publishing 2001), 58

Also found in that same chapter and verse are the words “serve tables.” The Greek word for serve is *diakoneo* or deacon, to serve or be a servant. All Christians at the time of conversion should begin serving. This frees the pastor to seek God’s face, minister the Word, and equip the people of God to do the work of ministry, and there is much work to be done but not enough equipped people to do the work. This leads to people who are not qualified being placed in position. I contend these positions should remain vacant until the proper persons are trained, equipped, nourished, and mentored by the pastor. Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.”³⁹

In this same verse the apostles realized that while serving the Hebrew and Grecian women was important it wasn’t important enough to leave the Word of God. Please know apostles had no problem with being servants waiting tables, they just knew the importance of prayer and ministering the Word of God. This is the plan of God for the local church. Men are appointed to oversee the feeding of the people at the same time the disciples study, and pray. This allows all God’s work to be completed. If the pastor does everything (clean the church, visit the sick, counsel, settle arguments, and cut the grass), there would be no need for deacons, ushers, greeters, singers, or Sunday school teachers. Pastors are at the top of God’s plan for how his local church is operated, they are very much needed.

In Acts 6, the apostles/pastors are literally saying it’s up to us to seek God continually, to search/study the Scripture, and to preach and teach the Word of God. God put Moses’ spirit on the seventy to assist him in carrying the load the process should be the same today.

39 Luke 10:2 (NKJV)

Pastors must learn to delegate responsibilities within the church. In some cases pastors are so accustomed to doing everything it is difficult to delegate. However, this process is in place to allow everyone the opportunity to work in ministry. There is much to do in ministry, so with everyone doing their part it lessens the possibility of burn out.

Questions for Reflection

1. *What is the sole responsibility of the pastor in the local church?*
2. *What is the most important reason the pastor is needed in the local church.*
3. *What ministry is introduced in this chapter?*
4. *Who is responsible for overseeing the overall work of ministry?*

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF THE SAINTS: RECEIVING THE PASTOR'S HEART AND SPIRIT

Pastors must have structure and organization in their local churches. Pastors have to teach the congregation God's plan for local church government. Training them to find their place in the body will lead them to their place and work in ministry. As the pastor teaches proper local church government, with proper biblical structure and organization, Order is simply the accurate arrangement of things.

The Pastor is to teach the people to obey commandments that are in the Word of God. "But pastors are also to teach church government and order that brings structure and organization with obeying God's commandments to the believers."⁴⁰ Obeying the commandments with the order that God commands trains the people to know how they can assist the pastor. When job descriptions are made clear no one is over worked in two or more positions. Everyone receives blessings from God and no one is stressed. If the people aren't trained to carry out the vision of the pastor, then the pastor will spend many, many hours doing what the people should have been doing, thus the pastor's duties are neglected. God will place the spirit of the pastor on the people working alongside him or her in ministry. If the people working don't have the heart of the pastor they will only work to keep rules rather than the spirit. "Rules without relationship bring rebellion."⁴¹

As the statement "perfecting" of the saints is used in Ephesians 4:12 the Greek word is *katartismos*, which means to complete furnishing and equipping.

⁴⁰ Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*, 22.

⁴¹ Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*: 23.

As God calls the pastor, and he places them in ministries and assigns them to pastors according to his will. “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”⁴²

God is sovereign and knows who and what every local pastor needs. God responds to Jethro’s request from Exodus Chapter 18. It is not now and has never been designed for the pastor to walk alone. No pastor was made for anxiety or stress. There are people who God places in ministry with pastors that will help lighten the load. The pastor’s spirit will be placed upon those who work alongside the pastor just as was the case with Moses, and the seventy:

And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost part of the camp And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou be not thyself alone.⁴³

As this transfer was being made it wasn’t just a wind, or air passing, God literally took a portion of the same passion for the vision that Moses had and placed it upon the seventy. “He was taking the same methodology of carrying out the vision.”⁴⁴ God actually placed the focus, the pain, and the frustration of the vision on the people to lighten the load for Moses. The same strength that God gave Moses for the vision he also gave to the seventy elders, and they could now feel the vision just as did Moses. The people became shareholders of the vision. Shareholders not only reap the positive benefits but also experience the negative. God placed the spirit that was on Moses upon the seventy that Moses brought to the tabernacle of the congregation and they stood with

⁴²1 Cor. 12:18 (KJV)

⁴³Num. 11: 1, 17 (KJV)

⁴⁴Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: 26

Moses. God poured the same spirit that was on Moses on the seventy so that they could work with Moses minus division. God's plan for the world and never included division.

Man has become the author of division by trying to operate minus God's plan.

"Now I beseech you, brethern, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."⁴⁵ I believe that the prerequisites for having Moses' spirit are still relevant to those working with their respective leaders today.

The first requirement was that they be people who know how to be gathered to the Lord by himself. This must include a heart of integrity and an inclination to be obedient to the assignment of God. Moses chose seventy that were all centered and on accord. It should be no different today. The men and women that the pastor pours his spirit upon must be focused on assisting in completing the assignment given to their leader. No one needs to have their own vision or agenda just those who have the heart and spirit of their pastor.

The second requirement was that their capabilities not only be recognized by their pastor but also by their peers. Their recognition was not only because of an office they held, but more importantly their commitment to their leader and the vision Moses was to select those he knew to be elders. "Eldership comes out of commitment, growth, maturity, faithfulness and trustworthiness."⁴⁶ Today in our local churches should be no different, the pastor should make sure that the people chosen are in good standing,

45 I Cor. 1:10 (KJV)

46 Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*: 28

trustworthy, dependable, and willing to make personal sacrifices to accomplish what God has given their leader via vision.

The final requirement was that the men be willing to stand with Moses. This requirement should never be taken lightly. When chosen to serve with the pastor one must be known and willing to stand through all types of adversity. They must be people who wouldn't leave the kitchen when it got hot. The pastor needs those who would lift them up when feeling down, and it looks grim. These people must be rooted, grounded, and unmoveable.

There is other evidence of one of the most considerable exits of a man of God and the dramatic beginning of his successor:

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.⁴⁷

“As the Scriptures reveal to us, the double portion anointing was the result of Elisha's pursuit and not the reason he pursued.”⁴⁸ There is an earthly reward for those who recognize their connection to their leader and remains committed regardless of what may come. There were a few things Elisha had to do to receive the double portion from Elijah. I believe these same principles are paramount today in catching the vision of your pastor as well having the spirit of your pastor:

1. **Elisha burned his plow.** The plow here refers to Elisha's dream. He had to burn it completely in order to receive the heart and spirit of Elijah. Those chosen today must do the same. They must forget completely about their personal ambitions for

⁴⁷ II Kings 2:9-12 (KJV)

⁴⁸ Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*: 30

the sake of not the pastor but the vision given to the pastor from God. This is biblical principle. Elisha sowed his present in order to reap his future.

2. **Elisha also dismissed what others thought based on what he knew.** “Elisha the relationship of focus to your destination. “He understood that what you look at the will either pull you through or pull you down.”⁴⁹ He understood he had no obligation to defend or explain himself to those who were not legitimately connected to Elijah. Those serving with the pastor must remain focused on the goal and that is the pastor’s heart. If others support you they’ll go with you or help you get there.”
3. **Elisha pursued without guarantee of any reward.** Elisha must have known that he had to be a part of greatness to become great himself. This is still true today if one is chosen to serve with their pastor they must do so unconditionally. Also their service must be that of a sacrificially sown seed into their future. As strange as it may sound those in pursuit of their pastor’s heart must do so without knowing what the outcome will be. Obedience suggests that those chosen follow instructions without any explanation. You will be instructed to stretch forth your rod but you won’t know whether the water the water is going to divide. You’ll be told not to bow to Nebuchadnezzar not knowing whether there will be a fourth man in the furnace or not. God must be trusted even he can’t be traced.
4. **Finally, Elisha understood the power of pursuit.** Elisha understood that he had to be willing to pursue in order to possess without that being his main objective.

48 Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: 31.

Reckless abandonment will determine realistic achievement.”⁵⁰ The last step prior to possession is pursuit. You have to move forward without anything. You will never possess anything until the pursuit of going after it overwhelms the passivity of living without it.⁵¹ When in pursuit of the pastor’s heart you will be required to relive past failures and hurts. That pursuit will sometimes have you rejected by your pastor and through literally not knowing what if anything you will receive in the end.

In the case of Elisha to Elijah the double portion was unheard of until the mountain top statement “Give me a double portion of what you have.” Someone once said, If you want something you’ve never had you must do something you’ve never done.” People who are satisfied with where they are will not be trusted with the pastor’s heart and or spirit. As we pursue, it silences regret from creating a photograph of what you could have had as you pursued.”⁵²

Having the heart and spirit of the pastor is a process and takes effort to keep. Many pastors mistakenly think that giving associate ministers, elders, musicians, or deacons a salary or position will assure that they keep their hearts and spirits. This is a myth that is furthest from the truth. During his day Elijah was the most powerful prophet there was, and God told him he was going to take him from the earth. Elisha was God’s choice to replace Elijah as God instructed Elijah to go to Elisha and he was to have his pastor’s heart and spirit.

⁵⁰Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: 33.

⁵¹Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: 33.

⁵² Tetsola, *The Pastor’s Heart*: 34.

Elisha had proven himself. Wherever Elijah went so did Elisha. This was found to be true by Elijah as a man that caught his pastor's heart.

Elijah was the principal of the three schools of the prophets which were in three different cities at Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho.⁵³ Each of these cities has significance, historical value and prophetic allegory (a spiritual meaning beyond its physical past happenings) that gives understanding of what it takes to keep the pastor's heart and spirit.⁵⁴

The life of Elijah and Elisha sets the tone as well as proves that one can have the heart and spirit of their pastor. It also shows that the person who does this not only can have these qualities but can keep them as well.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. *Who is responsible for equipping those chosen to serve with the pastor?*
2. *What are some characteristics those chosen must possess?*
3. *What did God instruct Moses to do in order to get help in ministry?*
4. *What type sacrifices need to be made for one who serves with their pastor?*

⁵³ Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*: 35, 35.

⁵⁴ Tetsola, *The Pastor's Heart*: 36.

CHAPTER 3:CHURCH AMINISTRATION: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

“Church administration is ministry, not methods.”⁵⁵ It’s not just people doing their own thing its human processes. Its professional management, not manipulation, I believe that proper church administration is necessary to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish in and through his church. The AARC is not familiar with a lot of modern technology, and in some cases just don’t know how to function with structure. I contend that having structure which includes policies and procedures would benefit the AARC with what already exists. In many cases there is never a paper trail that would assist in many of unresolved issues. One example I am familiar with is a church that had no policy in place as to where to bury in their church cemetery. There is no paper trail. As a result those persons with no tomb stones have no way of knowing where their loved ones were laid to rest. Even more important than that, the church is unable to use the cemetery now because they can’t insure the property without some type of paper trail as to where people are buried.

Church administration or management is a science, an art, and a gift. As a science, church management involves procedures and techniques that can be learned by study and by practice. As an art, administration calls for relational sensitivity, intuition, and timing. These artistic people skills are largely natural talents, but they can be enhanced by experience and training.⁵⁶

In I Cor. 12:28 the apostle Paul refers to administration as a spiritual gift by using the term governments. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily

⁵⁵ Bruce P. Powers, *Church Administration Handbook*: Nashville, TN: Broadman Holman Publishers, 1997), 3

⁵⁶ Powers, *Church Administration Handbook*: 3.

prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”⁵⁷ There are various types of administration styles and this simply means choosing a particular style of administration and being consistent with it. Time management is crucial in managing a congregation effectively. There are several statements supported by scripture as it relates to style and use of one’s time in administration. (1) God is the God of time and history. God has done redemptive work through persons and amid history, through the Exodus, The Exile, the incarnation, and the empty tomb. God’s use of time for redemption makes the use of our personal time precious. (2) The Bible speaks of two kinds of time *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos is the measured, durative time typical of clocks and calendars. All chronos belongs to God. Kairos smacks of timing and refers to time becoming ripe, full, and overflowing with opportunity (Mark 1:15; Luke 4:21; Matt 16:3; Luke 12:56). Ministers must use Chronos well in order to be ready to use kairos at all. (3) Jesus had time enough to do God’s will. Think of the scope of Jesus’ task and the relatively short time he had to accomplish it in. Yet he seemed to manage both the task and the time frame without apparent frustration. Jesus knew that persons are given adequate time to accomplish God’s purpose in their lives. (4) Grace frees Christians from yesterday’s sin and guilt as well as tomorrow’s fears and frustrations.⁵⁸ I contend that the pastor must be intentional in setting a pace that will work in his/her ministry. I will admit that not all I will suggest in this chapter will work in all AARCS but the pastor must be strategic in what will work and what won’t. In the following pages I will discuss a few of the things that I believe to be relevant but absent in my experience in the AARC.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 12:28 (KJV)

⁵⁸ Powers, *Church Administration Handbook*: 4.

Financial Procedures

Most churches are short of two resources and they are people and finances. I am of the opinion that budgeting is paramount when resources are as limited as they have been in my experiences. This is something that in a lot of cases is absent in the AARC. Finances are used as needed in many instances just for the asking, no paper trail whatsoever. Banking statements mailed to the home of the chair of the Trustee board basically because it's convenient, and that's because that person probably makes it to the church once a week and that's on Sunday. Then there's the issue on who counts the money? Traditionally, the trustees count the churches finances. However there's no scripture that I'm aware of that supports trustees being the only ones that count the churches finances. I'm of the opinion that the most important qualification of anyone counting the churches finances is that they be born again, and then whether trustee or not if they have financial background they should be able to serve on the finance committee.

A finance committee should be appointed and trained to give important financial leadership in the church. We have to be good stewards over everything that God has trusted us with. All teaching, preaching and training should be biblically based, and sometimes that doesn't work but your chances of being successful are better with the Word than without it. One problem I discovered while pastoring in the AARC is that people can be and are overly concerned with where their money goes and how it is used and they should be, (even to the extent that they'll stop giving if they're not satisfied). I'm not saying they shouldn't be concerned I'm merely suggesting that in my experiences their worries were unwarranted and unnecessary.

Annually a budget should be developed based on the churches finances. This doesn't have to be that complicated. Once this budget is developed then it should be presented to the church for approval. If there be any opposes then iron them out and follow the budget until time to develop another one the next year. I contend there should be requisitions completed by anyone requesting monies from the church, and before being issued approved by the pastor or a person designated by the pastor. Whoever approves it if not the pastor it should cross the pastor's desk somewhere in the process. In this day and time it is paramount that the pastor be aware of the finances in the church as well as everything else since ultimately the pastor is ex-officio of the church. There will be some necessary forms I believe essential to follow in this chapter.

Managing the Facility

Many feel that it is an abomination to refer to the church as a business. When I was a child the church was run primarily and in some cases solely from the tithe and offerings collected weekly. Well, times have changed and church administrators/pastors have to face that reality. A large number of this generation either does not believe in tithing, with this economy many just don't have jobs, and then the percentage of those attending church is declining. So as administrators we must strategically seek other means of revenue. Where in the past we were able to open the doors for use of the church just the asking it's just not that simple anymore. It has come to the place that we have to charge for use of our facilities. Basically in the AARC we would be speaking of the sanctuary, and or the fellowship hall, and there are some AARCS that are blessed with family life centers. Some urban churches have been using this strategy for quite some time. The fact is that to open a building there is manpower, utilities, and in some cases

the cleaning of the facility. The church where I belong there is a minimal fee for members for some things, and no charge for others depending on what it is. For instance to use one of the classrooms for a meeting as a member there is no charge. On the other hand to use the family center for a celebratory event there is a minimal charge for members. The procedure is as follows; there is a form that must be completed and submitted requesting the use of the facility (members and non members) this form must be submitted in a timely fashion to the designated person for approval. There will be an example of this type of form to follow in this chapter.

Planning Special Events

Weddings

Marriage is ordained by God and must be done with a spirit of excellence. I personally don't take joining two people together lightly and don't feel anyone else should either. I know out of all that's the pastor can't guarantee the marriage will last but I believe it is the pastor's responsibility to do as much as possible prior to the actual marriage ceremony. One thing I think is very important is premarital counseling. This is something that is basically unheard of in the AARCS that I've pastored and I would suffice to say in many urban churches as well. This is because "engaged couples usually want a ceremony, not counsel."⁵⁹ I had this experience on several occasions where the couple just wants to get married and have no interest in planning and doing the things that could possibly determine their compatibility. In all the cases that I married without the counsel those couples are no longer together. At some point I developed the strategy that I would no longer unite couples without the counseling piece and there were a few who

⁵⁹ Powers, *Church Administration Handbook*: 177.

accepted and went through the premarital counseling and others that went elsewhere and got married. I must say that those who accepted the strategy are still together. I haven't married that many couples however, out of those I have more stayed together that accepted the counsel than those who didn't. I must also admit that there were a few who did and the marriage wasn't who does some successful but I believe the counsel is very important before moving forward. I always tell people that I am a pastor counseling, not a counselor who pastors. With that said it becomes necessary to refer or outsource to persons trained in a particular area in this case marriage counseling. I know of a mega church in Nashville Tennessee that outsources all of their premarital counseling. I don't know for sure but knowing the pastor and his training and capabilities I would imagine that this is due to a couple of things. First, the size of his church (two locations); it could also be to release himself from any legal ramifications. Regardless to the reasons it supports premarital counseling. Finally, some churches have a qualified licensed counselor on staff and that person does all the premarital counseling. Needless to say you probably wouldn't find the above practices in an ARRC however; the pastor I believe should make this a requirement and if there are issues beyond the pastor then they should outsource before performing a ceremony. There is a scripture that I believe supports my strategy. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"⁶⁰

In my experiences most couples only want the pastor involved with the ceremony but I believe the pastor's work begins long before then. There will be an example of a form requesting premarital counseling to follow in this chapter (See forms section).

60 II Cor. 6:14 (KJV)


Funerals

The next area that I believe the pastor should take part in is death within the church family. In the AARC tenure is typically so short there is often times a request by the family that an outside minister eulogizes their loved one, and there is nothing wrong with that. This not only takes place in the AARC but in urban churches as well. The reason could be anything from the outside minister knowing the deceased; to the family not caring much for the present pastor (I've experience both.) However my point is that the pastor should be the first notified unless there has been someone designated by the pastor to receive this information and pass it on. The family may or may not want or need the counsel or assistance of the pastor in funeral arrangements however the pastor should be notified of the family's wishes as it relates to date and time of services. I also believe that the pastor has the right to know and approve of or disapprove of the eulogist, as well as the services. Needless to say this is met with much resistance. However as overseer of that pulpit (not dictator) but the responsible one that God has place over that pulpit. Also the pastor should be listed to officiate if nothing else. In many cases like this if the pastor is not being used they may or may not show up.

Finally, I will provide information on the Timothy Leaders, the Pastoral Care Team, the Ministers, and their function at the Friendship Church where my pastor is; His Grace Bishop John A. McCullough II and laboring right next to him is our vivacious First Lady, Elder Dekota Grier McCullough. I not only attend Friendship but In addition to being an associate minister I serve as one of four directors of our Timothy Leaders/Pastoral Care Team ministry. This ministry was designed to lighten the load of our leaders so that they'd have ample time to labor in the word. This team serves as mediators between pastor and members. Timothy leaders are made of two to three

members. Our membership is divided by alphabet between the Timothy leaders. There are separate Timothy leaders, for our Elder members and our youth members. Members report deaths, illnesses, hospital stays, and any emergency that may occur in their personal, immediate, and or extended families lives to their Timothy leader. The timothy leader reports same information to the directors/pastors care team. I want to emphasize that Bishop and Lady McCullough are always aware of all information but if either or both of them are unable to address a situation immediately it never unattended. The Timothy leaders are also responsible for following up with members in their absence, or just because, and with today's modern technology it's not as complicated. They may text, email, or make a scheduled visit. These visits are to be made and documented. This ministry does a couple of things, foremost and most important it lets members know they're more than just a number, it lightens the load of our leaders, and finally the plenteous harvest has more laborers. To follow will be information further explaining my function as one of the directors as well as the function of the ministry. This will include definitions as well as policies procedures and directives.

FORMS



221 West Bradley Avenue
Gastonia, North Carolina 28052
(704) 865-9016 • Fax: (704) 865-9057
Bishop John A. McCullough, Jr., Senior Pastor

**Regular Event
(Member)**
(i.e. Baby Shower, Birthday Party,
Family Reunion)

A member in good standing is one who has been a part of the Ministry for more than
One year with regular church attendance and in good financial standing.

USE OF BUILDING REQUEST FORM	
Church Building <input type="checkbox"/> Sanctuary (Profited Event: \$200.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Sanctuary (Non-profit Event - \$100.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Room #1 <input type="checkbox"/> Room #2 <input type="checkbox"/> Room #3 <input type="checkbox"/> Room #4 <input type="checkbox"/> Room #5 <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly Room \$150.00	Family Life Center <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium (Profited Event: \$400.00) (Maximum Capacity: 700) <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium (Non-Profited Event: \$300.00) (Maximum Capacity: 700) <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose Room (Maximum Capacity: 80) \$200.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen (Catering done by Friendship Staff Only / Fees May Apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
Date of Request: _____ Time: _____	
Person/Group Requesting: _____ Membership Number: _____	
Address: _____	
Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____	
(Mobile) _____ Fax: _____	
EVENT INFORMATION (Max 4hours)	
Date(s) of Event: _____	
Type of Event: _____	Number of People Expected: _____
Set-Up Time From _____ to _____	
Time Event Begins: _____	Time Event Ends: _____
Arrangements: _____	
SIGNATURE OF REQUESTOR: _____ Date: _____	
SUB-TOTAL: _____	SUB-TOTAL: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Fee may be waived for Community Service events	GRAND TOTAL: _____
SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR OF BUILDING AND OPERATIONS: _____	

- \$100.00 Deposit (Refundable)
- Room adjustments may be subject to change according to availability.
- Private event insurance may be required.
- **Security Services required for events of more than 50 people in attendance.
- * Extra Fees may apply.

FIGURE 1.1 USE OF BUILDING FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for reserving of church facilities.



FRIENDSHIP CHRISTIAN CHURCH
221 W. BRADLEY STREET
GASTONIA, NC 28052
704-865-9016 (OFFICE)
BISHOP JOHN A. MCCULLOUGH, II

REQUISITION/CHECK RECONCILIATION

DATE _____

NAME _____

MINISTRY _____

PHONE _____

AMOUNT OF CHECK _____

AMOUNT SPENT _____

AMOUNT LEFT (RETURNING) _____


NOTE: DO NOT EXCEED AUTHORIZED AMOUNT

ENCLOSE: CHECK STUB, CHANGE, AND RECEIPTS

SIGNATURE _____

FIGURE 1.2 REQUISITION/CHECK RECONCILIATION FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for reconciling individual church funds..

221 W. Bradley Avenue Gastonia, NC 28052
 704-885-9016 (office) 704-885-9057 (fax)
Richard John A. McCullough, II., Senior Pastor



Friendship Christian Church

Ministry Activity Approval Form

Ministry Information

Today's Date _____
 Name of Ministry _____
 Ministry Head _____
 Phone #: _____ Cell: _____ Other#: _____
 Email Address _____

Activity Information

DATE OF ACTIVITY/EVENT _____ TIMEFRAME _____
Type of Activity/Event (Please Check One)
☐ In-House Activity ☐ Off-Site Activity
☐ Description _____

☐ Number of People Involved _____
☐ What is the purpose for this activity? _____

Ministry Support Requested

<input type="checkbox"/> Finances _____ (amount)	<input type="checkbox"/> Van <u>Transportation</u> (See Next Section)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ushers/Greeters	<input type="checkbox"/> Musicians <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer/Deliverance Team
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Security</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaperones <input type="checkbox"/> Ministers
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

Transportation Information

Trip Location _____
 Depart Time _____ Return Time _____
 Approximate Miles to Location Mileage _____ Number of Vans Needed _____
 Name of (Approved) Driver _____ ☐ Driver(s) Needed

Approval (Church office Use- Only)

☐ Approved (Sent to Pastor for Information)
☐ Redirected (Sent back to Ministry Head for Clarification)
☐ Not Approved (Sent Back to Ministry Head for Notification)
 Signature of Director of Ministries _____ Date _____

FIGURE 1.3 MINISTRY ACTIVITY APPROVAL FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for obtaining approval for all ministry activities and church van.



Friendship Christian Church

221 W. Bradley Street
Gastonia, NC 28052
704-865-9016 (office) 704-865-9057 (fax)
Bishop John A. McCullough, II, Senior Pastor

Administrative Work Order Form

Please complete this form when requesting items to be processed by the Administrative Office. (Please allow two weeks for processing.)

Today's Date _____

Submitted By _____

Phone _____

Select Task to Be Done:

- ☐ Bulletin Announcement
- ☐ Copies
- ☐ Other _____

Announcement Wording (25 words or less) Please print! _____

- ☐ I will email the announcement wording to the church office.
(Text Messages will not be accepted.)

DEADLINE FOR ANNOUNCEMENT IS WEDNESDAY BEFORE 5:00pm

FIGURE 1.4 ADMINISTRATIVE WORK ORDER FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for requesting administrative assistance from the church office.



Monthly Contact FORM 01.031



Name	Date of Contact and Mode of Contact Call, Mail, or Visit	Comment/Concerns/Special Needs	Ministry or Person Follow Up Needed
John Doe	1/10/05 - C	Would like to join the choir	Music Ministry

Timothy Leader _____

Month _____

FIGURE 1.5 MONTHLY CONTACT FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for recording contact with membership.



Pastoral Care Information

(Director's Only)
Friendship Christian Church
221 W. Bradley Street, Gastonia, NC

Date _____

Member's Name _____

Hospital Information

Name of Hospital _____

Surgery Needed? _____ Yes _____ No

Time of Surgery _____

What time are you asked to arrive? _____

Contact Information of another family member who may be with you at the hospital. _____

Bereavement Information

Name of Deceased _____

Relation to Member _____

Address of Member _____

Telephone Number _____

Date of Service _____

Location of Service _____

Family Visitation Time _____

Funeral Time _____

Name of Funeral Home _____

Are there any needs? _____

If service is at FCC, are we asked to feed the family? _____

Number to prepare for? _____

Please note: we will prepare to serve 50 people. Any number above 50, we ask the family to assist in the cost of \$5.00 per person.

Are there any ministries needed? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, which ministries? _____

Is the family accepting flowers? _____ Yes _____ No

FIGURE 1.6 PASTORAL CARE INFORMATION FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for recording Hospital and or Bereavement information



Family Emergency Notification
Form 01.032

Date _____ Timothy Leader _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ STATE _____

Phone Number _____

Type of Emergency

_____ Illness _____ Death _____ Hospitalization _____ Other

Details _____

Follow Up Needs

Call the Church office **and** deliver or fax (704-865-9057) a copy of this form to the church office **immediately.**

(If you are unable to visit this family quickly, please notify
Elder Dorothy Able or Elder Kenneth Friday immediately.)

Be sure to log this visit on the Monthly Contact Form

FIGURE 1.7 FAMILY EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to report family emergency.

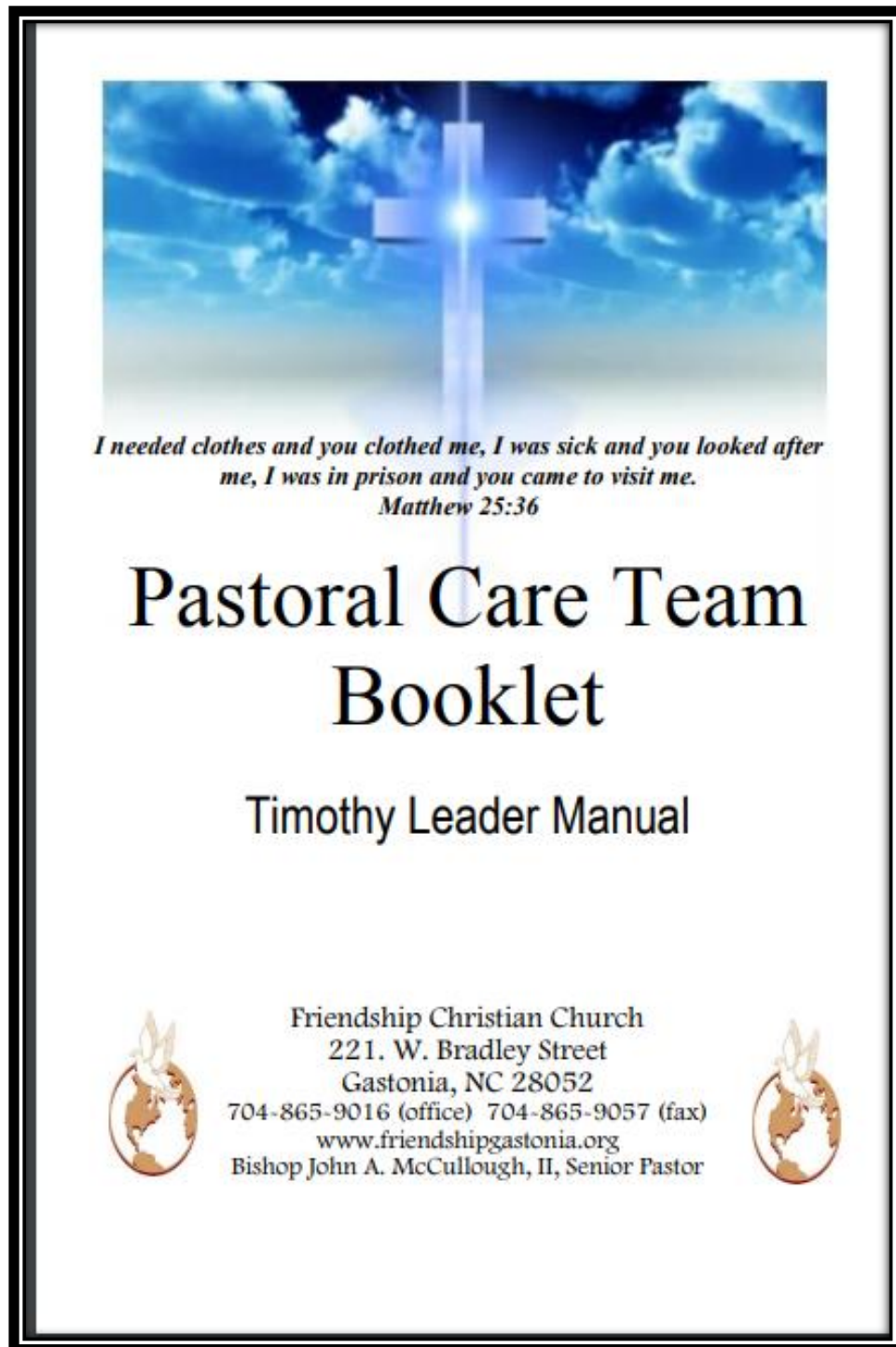


FIGURE 1.8 PASTORAL CARE TEAM BOOKLET COVER (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used as a guideline for Pastoral Care Team/Timothy Leaders.



To the Pastoral Care Team:

You have been chosen for service in this capacity because of your spiritual growth and commitment to the Kingdom of God.

As a pastoral care giver, you will have various responsibilities that will require you to serve, support and nurture a group within our church family. This care may come in the form of a visit to the hospital, attending a funeral, or offering prayer on their behalf. Nevertheless, we believe your walk with God has prepared you for the assignment and the Holy Spirit has led you to this position.

Therefore, as Pastor, I charge you to commit first to God and to this call. Please know that we work as a team formed by God's Spirit to edify the Body of Christ thus giving God the glory.

In Kingdom Service,

Bishop John A. McCullough, II, Senior Pastor

FIGURE 1.9 MESSAGE FROM SENIOR PASTOR (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to explain reason for appointment, and function.

Timothy Leaders

Who was Timothy?

Timothy means honoring God or precious to God.

Timothy put his faith in the Lord. - Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:13

Timothy ministered with Paul. - Acts 14:6

Timothy was a follower of the Messiah.

Timothy was a man of high character.

Paul was impressed by Timothy's qualities.

Paul spent time to mentor Timothy.

Timothy was an active faithful member of the missionary team.

Timothy became one of Paul's trusted partners.

Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to help the members of the local church.

Timothy had a heart for ministry.

Correlation:

As a member of Friendship, like Paul, Bishop sees those characteristics in the following Leaders. It is an honor to ask to serve with him as a Timothy Leader.

FIGURE 1.10 TIMOTHY LEADERS DESCRIPTION (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to define what a Timothy Leader is.

Monthly Contact Procedures

1. Contact each person assigned to you monthly by way of:
 - Face-to-face, phone call, text message, Facebook Messenger, email, US Mail (cards), and/or visit.
2. Please greet and introduce yourself (*Name – Friendship Timothy Leader, which means you are assigned to him or her for pastoral care.*) Comment on worship, prayer or Bible study, i.e.:
 - Is everything well?
 - Are you connected in ministry?
 - Do you have any questions for me?
3. Log contact information on form
4. Submit form to directors of pastoral care by 1st of each month.

Resources:

- Membership Roster
- Ministry Leader's Names and Contacts
- Visitation Packets for Those at Home - (As needed)
- Monthly Contact Form
- Ministry Business Card
- Emergency Notification Form

FIGURE 1.11 MONTHLY CONTACT PROCEDURES (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to explain member contact procedures.

Friendship Christian Church
Pastoral Care Ministry

Timothy Leaders Listing

(Elder Dorothy Able, Elder Kenneth Friday, and Overseer Henderson, and Sis. Veronica Campbell will serve as the Directors of Pastoral Care.)

(Alphabet for family and assigned team)

A	Sis. Sheryl Vasquez and Sis. Veronica Campbell
B	Deacon Jacob & Sis. Winona Barr, Sis. Jackie Kirkpatrick
C	Elder James & Sis. Jeannie Jefferies
D	Bro. Brandy & Sis. Nichole Tate
E-F	Bro. Joseph Guyton, Bro. Joel Guyton, Sis. Martha Jones
G	Elder Ralph & Sis. Vanessa Foster, Sis. Carolyn Watson
H	Deacon Sylvester & Sis. Peggy Washington
I-J	Sis. Barbara Falls and Sis. Bernadine Adams
K-L	Elder Chad Floyd and Sis. Ina Biggers
M	Elder Granita Boyd and Elder Joylette Hilliard
N-O-P	Deacon Calvin & Sis. Roberta Wingo
Q-R	Bro. Keith & Elder Charlene Robbins
S	Deacon Michael & Elder Cynthia Hall, Sis. Mary Ampley
T-U-V	Deacon Bobby Long & Sis. Janie Long
W-Wh	Bro. Clark & Sis. Tawanda Stephens, Elder JoAnn Hinson
Wi-Z	Elder Silvia Gardner and Elder Rick Camp

Senior Care

Deacon T.J. & Sis. Sharon Montgomery

Youth Care

Sis. Jessica McCullough-Hart, Min. Ashley Williams, Elder Michelle Harris

FIGURE 1.12 DIRECTORY (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to list Pastoral Care Team/Timothy Leaders and breakdown assignments alphabetically.

Family Emergency Notifications

You have been assigned alphabetically who will contact you in the event of illness, death, hospitalization, or other family emergencies. When a member contacts you, please notify the church office and follow visitation procedures as outlined below:

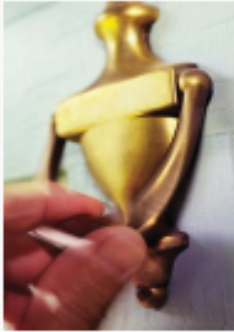
Procedures

When you are notified by a family regarding illness, death, hospitalization, or other family emergencies, please follow these procedures to ensure that each person receives support from their church family:

1. Notify the church and/or Elder Able, Elder Friday, Overseer Henderson, or Sis. Veronica Campbell immediately at 704-772-6507.
2. Visit the person as soon as possible (we recommend within 24 hours).
3. Be sure to respect the person's privacy by not asking personal questions.
4. Ask if it is ok to share this information with the Pastoral Care Team and/or congregation.
5. Before ending call, offer prayer and encouragement; please do not make any promises.
6. Please complete Emergency Notification Form and relay information to Directors of Pastoral Care.
7. Please note the situation on your Monthly Contact Form for follow-up.

FIGURE 1.13 FAMILY EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE FORM
(Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to explain procedures if notified of a Family emergency.

Visiting Members at Home



It is important that members receive a follow-up visit while recuperating at home. It is FCC's way of keeping them connected to their church family. These are crucial moments for them and reaching out to them is a necessity.

1. Call before you go to make sure they are mobile; they may be home alone and can't make it to the door.
2. Take a CD of Sunday's service along with a bulletin and tithing envelope This should be a part of the Visitation Packet.
3. Visit with a partner. Take your Timothy Leader partner or connect with another Elder, Minister, Deacon, or Timothy Leader to assist you.
4. Please log the situation on your Monthly Contact Form for follow-up.

FIGURE 1.14 HOME VISITATION PROCEDURE FORM (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used for procedures on Home Visitation.

Visiting Members When There is a Death



Visitation during a death demands concentration and can be physically, spiritually, and emotionally draining; therefore, it is necessary to prepare with prayer and personal worship. Often times, it can appear unrewarding; just remember who you are and your purpose.

1. Greet everyone
2. Introduce yourself
3. Sit (when invited to)
4. Listen to what is shared by family members
5. Avoid asking questions about the events of the death
6. Offer words of comfort – be uplifting
7. Show compassion
8. Offer family prayer
9. Limit your visit to 10-15 minutes.
10. Follow-up immediately to ensure that the church is informed about the death.
11. Refer any questions about the funeral planning to Elder Able, Elder Friday, Overseer Henderson, and/or Sis. Veronica Campbell (Directors of Pastoral Care).

FIGURE 1.15 VISITATION WHEN THERE IS A DEATH (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to Explain Visitation Procedures in the Event of a Death.

Visiting Members When in the Hospital



A hospital visit is mandatory with each member's hospitalization! Please remember that it is a vulnerable time for the patient and compassion and sensitivity is necessary.

Reminders:

1. **An agenda is not necessary.** Each patient will be different; their physical and spiritual needs will require different 'touches'. Agendas keep the focus on you.
2. **As you enter the room,** please remember to allow the patient to see you wash/sanitize your hands.
3. **It's alright to be silent.** There will be many situations when silence is necessary for the patient; lack of rest, drug effects, pain or discomfort and anxiety. They may not want to share their intimate details or thoughts with you.
4. **The focus is NOT on you!** Resist the impulse to talk about personal experiences or become the star of the visit. They are the reason you are there.
5. **Listen to the patient.** Your visit is a time to listen – not to monopolize the conversation.
6. **Don't compare patients.** Don't liken the patient's symptoms to anyone else. Talking about a more dire diagnosis will not make the patient feel better. It is unethical to use the case without that person's permission.
7. **Refrain from giving advice.** You are a visitor, not a counselor or doctor. If the patient is seeking advice or help, the best you can do is to be a

FIGURE 1.16 HOSPITAL VISITATION PROCEDURE (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used to Explain Hospital Visitation Procedures.

- facilitator so that he/she can sort matters out himself/herself with a little guidance.
8. **Confidentiality is a must.** Often information is shared in a sickroom, but this information should not be shared outside of the room.
 9. **Keep your visit brief.** Don't let your visit become a further endurance trial for the patient. Depending upon the nature of the patient's admittance a 15-minute visit is sufficient.
 10. **Doctor's visits are personal.** When the doctor(s) enter to discuss information or examine the patient, please step out and give privacy.
 11. **Search for Spiritual Guidance.** Some patients may request you to read scripture, please remember to take a small pocket-sized Bible.
 12. **Before leaving, pray with the patient and the family members (if present).** Be sure to ask the patient and family members what their prayer needs are – in your prayer, make sure they hear their request being lifted up. Remember your time is limited and your prayer should not be a long prayer. Be uplifting. Get permission to anoint with oil.
 13. **If a Timothy Leader** is unable to visit a member, please contact the Directors of Pastoral Care.

FIGURE 1.17⁷ HOSPITAL VISITATION PROCEDURE CONT. (Obtained from Friendship Christian Church, Gastonia, NC) used explain Procedures for Hospital Visitation.

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VITA

for
George W. Henderson, Jr.

George W. Henderson, Jr. is a native of Charlotte, NC. He was born January 26, 1960. After accepting the call to ministry, he was licensed to the Gospel Ministry in 1976 and was ordained in 1982. George served as Senior Pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Kannapolis, NC from 1982 - 1986. He then served under the leadership of Bishop A. L. Jinwright at Greater Salem Church for a little over twenty-five years. At Greater Salem, George served on the prison ministry, the evangelism team, armor bearer group D, the men of armor, and a member of the college of ministers. He also served as Senior Pastor of Shady Grove Baptist Church, Gaffney, SC from 2004 - 2005, Senior Pastor of The City of Refuge Church, Gaffney, SC from 2006 - 2008, and Senior Pastor of New Zion Baptist Church, Rock Hill, SC from 2009-2012.

George was ordained Elder on January 28, 2006 and appointed to the office of Overseer in the Lord's Church on January 24, 2009 under the leadership of Bishop A. L. Jinwright presiding Prelate of The Father's Council of Covenant Ministries Charlotte, NC.

Mr. Henderson presently serves under the leadership of Bishop John A. McCullough II at Friendship Christian Church Gastonia NC.

Mr. Henderson is a graduate of Shaw University where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion/Philosophy. He then earned the Master of Divinity degree from Shaw Divinity School. He is the former chaplain, and past president of the student government association and has received numerous awards for his academic achievements. For the past eleven years, George has been a student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he is presently a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry Degree. His expected date of graduation is May 2019.

George truly believes and lives according to the scripture: Psalms 121, especially verses one and two, **"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help comes from the Lord which made the heavens and the earth."**

He is married to the lovely Catherine White-Henderson, and they are the parents of four young men and four young ladies.